Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Allegiances
3. Map of the Clans
4. Prologue
5. Chapter 1
6. Chapter 2
7. Chapter 3
8. Chapter 4
9. Chapter 5
10. Chapter 6
11. Chapter 7
12. Chapter 8
13. Chapter 9
14. Chapter 10
15. Chapter 11
16. Chapter 12
17. Chapter 13
18. Chapter 14
19. Chapter 15
20. Chapter 16
21. Chapter 17
22. Chapter 18
23. Chapter 19
24. Chapter 20
25. Chapter 21
26. Chapter 22
27. Chapter 23
28. Chapter 24
29. Chapter 25
30. Chapter 26
31. Chapter 27
32. Chapter 28
33. Chapter 29
34. Chapter 30

35. Chapter 31
36. Chapter 32
37. Chapter 33
38. Chapter 34
39. Chapter 35
40. Chapter 36
41. Chapter 37

Introduction

I'm back with a new story that I've started to write. This time I will finish this and not leave it as discontinued. My writing has also had gotten better and I've been trying to write more in each chapter.

This story contains a great storm that might end the clans. Two cats could be able to rescue the clans with the powers that Starclan has given them.

I've created all characters and clan names used in the book.

There will be four main characters, one from each clan. All having different personalities.

This will contain blood and gore for this is a Warrior cat fanfiction.

I have written some chapters beforehand so I will try to regularly update at least once every two weeks at the most. I will try my best to write as much as I can to give to you all who reads this

The allegiances will be out soon so look forward to that.

Allegiances

Fun fact: the cats outside of the clans are my actual cats.

MorningClan

Leader
Lionstar - *A big fluffy orange tom with big paws*

Deputy
Shimmersky - *A slim white and gray she-cat*

Medicine Cat
Sunstep - *A white and golden tom*

Warriors
Littlestep - *A white she-cat with orange dapples*
Redripple - *A red tom with bright blue eyes*
Apprentice, Snowpaw
Streamsong - *A silver she-cat*
Ravenfall - *A black tom with a white tail tip*
Riverstripe - *A silver tom with black stripes*
Ottersplash - *A white she-cat with brown splotches*
Apprentice, Tawnypaw
Birchclaw - *A brown tom with darker markings*
Rowanfrost - *A brown tom with a white chest and bright blue eyes*
Apprentice, Foxpaw
Stormwhisker - *A light brown tom*

Apprentices
Snowpaw - *A white she-cat*
Tawnypaw - *A tortoiseshell she-cat*

Foxpaw - *A red she-cat*

Queens
Berrypool - *A flame point she-cat with big blue eyes* -- Kits: Cloverkit, Sandykit, & Pinekit
Lilywhisker - *A red tabby she-cat* -- Expecting Birchclaw's Kits

Elders
Spiritleaf - *A fluffy white she-cat*
Rockpelt - *A fluffy dark brown tom with a short tail*
Minnowslip - *A brown and white dappled she-cat*

Kits
Cloverkit - *A brown and white dappled she-cat* -- 3 Moons
Sandykit - *A cream she-ca*t -- 3 Moons
Pinekit - *A dark brown tom with white underbelly and paws* -- 3 Moons

MarshClan

Leader
Flamestar - *A dark reddish-brown tom with green eyes*

Deputy
Shadowear - *A black tom with a missing ear*

Medicine Cat
Gorseshine - *A white she-cat with gray spots*
Apprentice, Robinpaw

Warriors
Frogsplash - *A white tom with gray splotches*
Tinyslip - *A white and gray splotched she-cat*
Forestshadow - *A black tom*
Apprentice, Maplepaw
Dawnberry - *A dark ginger she-cat*
Burnpelt - *A red tom with dark green eyes*
Apprentice, Creampaw
Spottedheart - *A calico she-cat with green-yellow eyes*
Yellowflight - *A cream tom with dull green eyes*
Darkwhisper - *A bluish-grey tom with brown eyes*

Treestripe - *A brown tabby tom*
Newtleaf - *A pure white she-cat*

Apprentices
Robinpaw - *A small reddish-brown she-ca*t
Maplepaw - *A calico she-cat*
Creampaw - *A cream tom*

Queens
Fernstep - *A light brown tabby she-cat* -- Kits: Brackenkit

Elders
Nettleleaf - *A white she-cat with a black tai*l
Mudnose - *A dark brown tom*

Kits
Brackenkit - *A light brown tom with a white underbelly and darker stripes* -- 1 Moon

Cottonclan

Leader
Curlstar - *A light brown she-cat with curled ears*

Deputy
Heatherheart - *a black and orange she-cat*
Apprentice, Honeypaw

Medicine Cat
Mouseshine - *A gray tabby she-cat with green-brown eyes*

Warriors
Dustywing - *A black tom with a white underbelly*
Apprentice, Frostpaw
Grayspot - *A dark gray she-cat with black spots*
Barkpelt - *A fluffy light brown tom*
Spiderspot - *A brown tom with darker spots*
Timberfang - *A cream tabby tom*
Amberwish - *A golden she-cat*
Juniperslash - *A black tom with dull green eyes*

Pouncemist - *A gray tabby she-cat with green eyes*
Apprentice, Mintpaw
Snowcloud - *A pure white she-cat with brown eyes*
Pebblewing - *A light gray tom with brown eyes*

Apprentices
Honeypaw - *A slim cream she-cat with darker stripes*
Mintpaw - *A orange she-cat with patches of white*
Frostpaw - *A white tom with brownish green eyes*

Queens
Poppymist - *A calico she-cat with bright green eyes* -- Kits: Featherkit & Marigoldkit
Squrrielskip - *A orange she-cat with a white underbelly* -- Expecting Pebblewing's Kits

Elders
Larkfeather - *A brown and black she-cat*
Fuzzywhisker - *A orange and black tom*

Kits
Featherkit - *A tortoiseshell she-cat with brown eyes* -- 4 Moons
Marigoldkit - *A light orange she-cat* -- 4 Moons

MeadowClan

Leader
Cheetahstar - *A slim brown spotted tom*

Deputy
Plumbreeze - *A black she-cat with a white muzzle and under belly*

Medicine Cat
Blackstep - *A black tom*
Apprentice, Ryepaw

Warriors
Harerunner - *A cream tom with light brown swirls*
Swiftcloud - *A black she-cat with a white muzzle and underbelly*
Apprentice, Icepaw

Eagletail - *A cream tom with a missing tail*
Brindlefrost - *A white and brown she-cat with bright blue eyes*
Apprentice, Hazelpaw
Windbreeze - *A white she-cat with a black tail and spot over one eye*
Moorpatch - *A white tom with gold patches*
Apprentice, Wolfpaw
Bluemist - *A blueish gray she-cat*
Crowglade - *A black tom*
Rabbitstorm - *A slender brown tom with green eyes*
Grasslight - *A light orange she-cat*
Drizzlefrost- *A gray she-cat with a long tail*
Whitefire- *A white tom with orange eyes*

Apprentices
Ryepaw - *A light brown tom with darker swirls*
Wolfpaw - *A silver tabby she-cat*
Icepaw - *A gray she-cat with purple eyes*
Hazelpaw - *A silver she-cat with black stripes*

Queens
Brightfeather - *A light cream she-cat with dark brown paws, ears, and tail* -- Kits: Mossykit
Breezepool - *A white she-cat with black mask, ears, paws and tail tip* -- Kits: Ravenkit & Morningkit
Dewspring - *A light orange she-cat* -- Kits: Badgerkit, Shinekit, & Wildkit

Elders
Hawkcloud - *A brown tom with darker stripes*
Sparkrise - *A golden tabby she-cat with brown eyes*

Kits
Mossykit - *A cream tom with light brown paws, ears, mask, and tail* -- 5 Moons
Ravenkit - *A dark gray tom with a white underbelly and paws* -- 4 Moons
Morningkit - *A white she-cat with a dark gray mask* -- 4 Moons
Badgerkit - *A dark brown tom* -- 1 Moon
Shinekit - *A light orange she-cat with blue eyes* -- 1 Moon
Wildkit - *A brown tom with darker stripes* -- 1 Moon

Cats Outside Clans

Snickers - *A light orange tabby she-cat*
Sage - *A blueish gray she-cat*
Misty - *A gray she-cat with black stripes*

For the actual pictures of all the cats, use this link-

http://apawineachworld.com/untoldlegacy/?shareGuid=65ff3a58-9f1e-c201-9761-93325b942672

Map of the Clans

The prologue should be put soon. I'll overlook it before posting it.

Prologue

[image]

Stars shimmered in the pool below the five cats surrounding it. They watched as the fate for the four clans played out in front of them. A dappled she-cat backed away from the pool.

"We must warn them before it is too late. They will all die if we don't," a pitch-black she-cat said.

"Nightpath is right. We can't let them suffer. We must protect them from this," a light brown tom with piercing amber eyes said as his pelt ruffled up.

"Who will be the one to deliver the prophecy?" A grayish-blue tom meowed.

"We must first decide who will receive this prophecy. We must trust this cat to deliver it to the clans or else they won't be prepared and will all die," A white and brown she-cat spoke up.

They all glanced down at the pool to see if it would reveal an answer to them. The pool was black for another few seconds before a light brown tom with dark swirls appeared. His ears were folded downwards.

"This cat is only just a medicine cat apprentice. How can we trust him to carry it out? This prophecy is too important to give to an apprentice," the brown tom hissed.

"Patience, Bearclaw. The pool has spoken and we must follow it. This apprentice will deliver the prophecy to the clans," Nightpath declared.

"What clan is he in?" the dappled she-cat said.

"He is in Meadowclan, Dapplesnow," Bearclaw answered.

"Then Stormwind will be the one who will deliver the prophecy.

You once lived in Meadowclan. He will trust you better than anybody else here," the white and brown she-cat spoke.

"I don't know, Willowfall. I really haven't done this kind of thing," Stormwind mumbled.

"You are from Meadowclan and none of us are. You must do it," Dapplesnow declared.

"Why can't another cat from Meadowclan do it. I'm not the right cat." The tom backed away. His tail kept low to the ground.

"We need you to do this. Please, Stormwind."

"Alright, I'll do it. Just help me with what I have to say."

"Just talk about what you saw in the pool," Willowfall said. She placed her tail around the tom's shoulders to comfort him for being so nervous. He purred at her to show his appreciation.

"You must deliver it either tonight or tomorrow. We have to allow the clans to be prepared for what is to come," Bearclaw said. Stormwind nodded.

The meeting ended as all of the cats left leaving only Stormwind. He stared at the pool once again as the same image as before played back. He glanced down at his paws.

"I sure hope they will survive this."

Chapter 1

[image]

The sun shone through the entrance of the den. The birds sang in the distance. The scents throughout the den smelled of sweet milk.

Pinekit rose from his bed that he shared with his mother and his two littermates. He was the first one to wake up. He rubbed his eyes and quietly padded out of the den.

The warriors and apprentices were already working. The dawn patrol just returned from their hunt and every cat dragged in their own piece of prey.

Pinekit ran over to the patrol as he saw his friend pulling in a big squirrel.

"That's so big, Snowpaw! I want to catch something that big when I become an apprentice. I'm going to be the best warrior ever!" Pinekit meowed.

"You still have some moons before that will happen. For now, enjoy your time as a kit. Food gets handed to you," a red she-cat apprentice snickered from behind Snowpaw.

"Foxpaw, you could be a bit nicer. You were like that as a kit too," Snowpaw said.

"I was not. I didn't complain about it, I went out and made sure I was going to become a warrior."

"You also got caught and couldn't leave the nursery for a moon. Lilywhisker had to sit on you to make sure you wouldn't leave," Tawnypaw chimed in as she padded over to them.

"Like you can say anything. You don't even belong here. Why don't you go back to where you came from," Foxpaw hissed.

Tawnypaw's tail drooped down. Six moons ago, Ottersplash

found Tawnypaw out by the river. She had to save her when she fell into the river. The clan didn't know where she came from. Everyone thinks her mother abandoned her. Some say she was a kittypet or a rouge. It was also possible for Tawnypaw's mother to be a loner or in another clan.

"Foxpaw you need to be nicer to your denmate." Pinekit turned around and saw Rownfrost come walking over to the group. Rowanfrost was Foxpaw's mentor, but also he was Pinekit's father. "Since you can't be nice I'll have you remove the ticks off the elders for the next three days until you can show respect for your clanmates."

Foxpaw tried to protest but was quickly shut up by Rowanfrost. She gave a small hiss over to them before walking off.

"Sometimes she needs to be nicer. She has an attitude sometimes," Rowanfrost says as he licks his paw. "I'm sorry for Foxpaw's actions. Tell me if anything else happens."

"Of course," Tawnypaw replied.

Rowanfrost looked over and saw the kit sitting there. "How's the training going?"

"I think I could be an apprentice right now. I've been practicing the moves you showed me yesterday. I have them down," Pinekit said as he lowers himself to the ground before leaping at a nearby leaf.

"Keep practicing and you'll be an apprentice in no time," Rowanfrost purred.

Two kits tumbled out of the nursery and came running over to them. They were Sandykit and Cloverkit, Pinekit's littermates.

"Why didn't you wake us up. We wanted to learn a battle moves too," Sandykit said.

"I just woke up. I didn't want to bother you two or Berrypool. Lilywhisker was also still asleep."

Lilywhisker was Foxpaw's mother. After Foxpaw became an apprentice, Lilywhisker announced that she was expecting more kits and stayed in the nursery while Foxpaw moved out to the apprentice's den, joining Snowpaw and Tawnypaw.

"Teach us something today," Cloverkit said as she jumped around Rowanfrost.

"Show me your hunter's crouch. It'll be very important for when you become apprentices."

The three kits lowered themselves down to the ground. Their belly fur barely brushing the ground.

"Sandykit, lower your tail a bit more and Cloverkit stop moving your tail. Pinekit you need to lower your back down." They all followed the warrior's feedback before he moved a leaf out in front of them.

"I want you to each jump out and try to land perfectly on this leaf without crushing it."

"But it is a leaf? How are we now going to crush it?" Cloverkit asked.

"Your jump should be perfect enough to make no sound when landing."

Sandykit was the first one who tried. She crouched down and prepared to leap. She flew in the air before coming down and smashing the leaf into millions of pieces.

"This is impossible," she complained.

"Not if you put your mind to it. It will take some practice. If you can do this before you become an apprentice then you'll make a very good warrior. You must have the patience to become a warrior. Don't give up too easily."

"Are you teaching them battle moves again? I told you they are too small for that," a beautiful she-cat says.

"Berrypool, they have to learn at some point," Rowanfrost says as he pads over to his mate and gives her a nuzzle.

"What are you teaching them today?"

"I'm having them practice not crushing the leaf when they land on it. They aren't doing so well yet."

"With you as their father, I'm sure they'll figure it out." The two purred and walked away with their tails twined together.

"Is this really possible? We've been trying it over and over again. Why can't I do it?" Sandykit protested.

Meanwhile, as they complained, Pinekit was off in his own world. *I can do it. I'm the kit of Rowanfrost, one of the best warriors. I will do this and become the best warrior ever!*

Chapter 2

[image]

Honeypaw padded into the camp. She carried nothing in her mouth from the patrol that she just went out on with her mentor. Honeypaw didn't care. She just wanted to curl up in her nest and fall asleep.

"Honeypaw, you were so unfocused this morning. What is going on? Your assessment is coming up and you aren't trying to pass," Honeypaw's mentor, Heatherheart said. Heatherheart was the deputy of Cottonclan. So she likes to push Honeypaw even harder because of her high position.

"I don't feel like doing anything right now. I just want to stay in the camp." Honeypaw followed her mentor when she went to drop her prey off into the freshkill pile.

"Honeypaw, I know Sunmist died, but you can't let that overtake the rest of your life."

Sunmist was Honeypaw's mother. She died the last moon from a dog attack. She was out on a hunting patrol and she wandered off on her own and was attacked by a dog from the nearby twoleg place.

It took Honeypaw a while before she ever left the camp. She would sit alone far off in the corner away from everybody. She hardly ever ate and only moved to go to the dirtplace or head back to her nest.

"I don't care. I want to be left alone. Just leave me to grieve if that is what I need. That is what is best for me," Honeypaw lashed her tail and marched away from Heatherheart.

Heatherheart chased after her, but Honeypaw only ignored her. She sat back in her corner, staring out into the distance.

"Honeypaw I do care for you. I just wanted you to become a good

warrior. You can stay in camp tomorrow only if you promise me that when I take you out, can you at least try to feed your clan?"

Honeypaw murmured a quiet yes. Heatherheart flicked her tail goodbye before wandering off to chat with some of her clanmates.

Honeypaw laid there until sunset. She never ate anything and watched her clanmates come in and out of the camp. She wanted to help her clan, but she missed Sunmist so much. She was always on her mind.

"Hey, Honeypaw," a cat called out to her. She turned her head to see Mintpaw come padding up to her. Her sister, Frostpaw, was following behind her.

"You want to share something to eat before heading into the den. Heatherheart said you never ate anything today," Mintpaw said pushing a rabbit towards her.

"I'm fine," Honeypaw mumbled. She looked away from her denmates and stared back at the camp entrance, where the last patrol was making their way in and heading to their den's for the night.

"Come on. I know you're hungry. Just a few bites," Frostpaw pleaded. Honeypaw sighed and reached over to pull the rabbit closer. She took a few bites before pushing it back over to Mintpaw.

"I'm going to sleep," Honeypaw said, standing up and leaving the two apprentices alone.

"I guess Heatherheart was right. Something isn't right with Honeypaw. We should go talk to Mouseshine," Mintpaw said to her littermate.

Honeypaw scoffed when she heard the two talking. *I'm perfectly fine. Nobody needs to worry over me. Just leave me alone*, Honeypaw thought. She walked into the apprentices den and curled up into her nest. She laid her tail over her nose and drifted off to sleep.

Honeypaw woke in an open forest. There weren't any sounds or scents around her. She walked around to see anything or any cat

was around her.

There was a shuffle of a bush behind her. She turned around, but nothing was there. She continued on, trying to find anything around her.

She stopped when she saw a cream she-cat standing in front of her. Her fur blew through the wind. Her tail was tucked neatly around her feet. She wasn't looking at Honeypaw but was staring off into the forest.

"*Sunmist*," Honeypaw whispered. The sparkling pelt of her mother stood in front of her. She never looked back when Honeypaw called her name.

Honeypaw padded forward and touched her nose to her mother's shoulder. Sunmist looked down at her kit. She licked Honeypaw's ear, liked how she always did when Honeypaw was young.

"Honeypaw, I've been watching you. Why aren't you helping the clan? You've been doing nothing every single day," Sunmist spoke. There wasn't a harsh tone in her voice, but she spoke softly.

"I miss you so much. I want you by my side, not in my dreams," Honeypaw lowered her head.

"I've wanted you to become the best warrior in Cottonclan. You are almost a warrior. You will never become one if you continue this behavior."

"I promise to work hard again. Barkpelt never pays attention to me. He will just run off with other she-cats. I'm surprised none of them have been expecting yet."

"Don't mind your father. It took a while before Barkpelt and I ever became mates. He did go off with other she-cats, but he stuck around when we became mates. Then we had you. We both loved you very much. I just think you remind him of me. He might be still heartbroken."

"Then why does he go off with a bunch of she-cats. I don't consider him as my father anymore. He doesn't care about me."

"Give him time. Both of you are grieving. I have never left any of you. I'm with you here." Sunmist placed her tail on Honeypaw's heart. "I have never left this place. Now go back and try to become the warrior I wished you to be."

"I will." They touched noses before Honeypaw's vision went to darkness. She blinked open her eyes and saw the familiar den. She stood up and stretched her muscles before heading out of the den.

Her mentor was finishing up morning patrols. Honeypaw waited for her to get done before making her way over.

"Hello, Honeypaw. I'm going out to hunt. You can stay in camp-like I promised you yesterday," Heatherheart said as she flicked her tail to Dustywind, Frostpaw, and Timberfang, who were waiting for the deputy to join them.

"I actually want to go. I've put some thought into my future and decided that I want to become a warrior soon rather than later," Honeypaw says as she plays with a leaf laying on the ground.

"That's great. I'm glad you've gotten over your grief to continue your usual activities. You can come with us. Frostpaw was wanting to see who could catch the most prey with you for a while, but you were lost in thought all the time."

Heatherheart led Honeypaw over to the patrol as they made their way out of the camp to see what prey was running around this morning.

Chapter 3

[image]

Tinyslip walked over to the clearing in the camp. Flamestar had just called a clan meeting. Tinyslip guessed it was for the kits to become apprentices. Creamkit and Maplekit had to wait for an extra moon to become apprentices because they caught a greencough and it took them both a while to recover so Flamestar made the decision to hold them back one moon.

"Cats of Marshclan. I have called us together to welcome our new apprentices to the clans," Flamestar. The two kits padded up to the ledge underneath the leader. "It is time to have Creamkit and Maplekit to become apprentices."

The reddish-brown tom leaped down from the ledge and stood in front of the two kits. "Burnpelt, I've chosen you to become the mentor of Creampaw. You're skilled in strength and I hope to pass down your knowledge to your new apprentice."

Burnpelt made his way up to the front. The two cats touched their noses to each to accept one another. Flamestar turned his attention to the calico she-cat that was bouncing up and down to know her mentor.

"Forestshadow, I believe it is time for you to receive your first apprentice. We haven't had much luck with kits recently, so I expect you will train Maplepaw to become a good warrior."

The black tom padded forward and they touched their noses together. They stood at the front as the clan began to call the new apprentices' names.

This moment made Tinyslip remember her own apprenticeship. She had only just become a warrior a few moons ago. She was lucky enough to have a good mentor. Dawnberry trained her until the very end when she announced that she was expecting kits. She gave birth to our medicine cat apprentice, Robinpaw.

Robinpaw was the only kit to survive in the litter. Her two littermates died soon after being born. Dawnberry called them Geckokit and Skykit. After they died, Dawnberry paid a lot of attention to Robinpaw. She was never allowed to leave her sight. Dawnberry was too scared to lose her too.

Tinyslip wished she had a mother. Her mother died as she gave birth to her. She never knew Nightpath. She asks her father, Frogsplash, all the time to tell her stories about her mother. He would go on for days talking about Nightpaw. He wished that Tinyslip could meet her.

Tinyslip was very close to Frogsplash. They did most patrols together and normally went out hunting with one another. They would share tongues every sunhigh. Frogsplash keeps nagging her to find a mate so because he makes her bored all the time.

"I'm too young to be thinking about that. I've just become a warrior only a few moons ago. You're just trying to get rid of me," Tinyslip would always joke.

"I just want you to have a good future in the clan. I also want to meet my kin before I get old," he would remark.

Tinyslip moved towards the freshkill pile. She picked up a dove and walked over to where her father was talking to Newtleaf.

"The clan has been lacking kits recently. I wonder if Flamestar only agreed to be Fernstep's mate to have more kits be born. We've really only been having litters of only one kit. Poor Brackenkit will grow up by himself," Newtleaf muttered to Frogsplash.

"Everyone is just focused on the clan. They don't want to have kits right now," he said.

"We could become mates and produce kits for the clan." Newtleaf nuzzled into Frogsplash's fur. She let out a low purr.

"I'm not looking for a new mate." The gray splotched tom said as he backed away from her.

"Can't you just get over Nightpath and move on. Focus on the

present instead of the past," she retorted as she marched away from him. He hung his head low.

"Don't worry about her. You're just too handsome that no she-cat can resist you," Tinyslip joked as she dropped the dove in front of his paws.

"They just keep coming, but I feel like I would betray Nightpath if I took on another mate. She is the only she-cat that has my love. I can't move on to another one just because she is in Starclan."

"I guess I'm not important anymore. I'll go share my dove with someone else then."

"Both your mother and you are the she-cats that I love the most. I mean you look very similar to me."

"I got the bad end of the looks."

"Your mother was so beautiful that she couldn't have anybody take her looks as well."

"That's it," Tinyslip said as she pounced on her father. They wrestled each other before a bruting voice sounded behind them that they split up.

"You both are warriors. You shouldn't be play fighting," Shadowear, Marshclan's deputy, said.

"Come on. We were just having fun," Frogsplash said as he licked the leaf crumbles out of the pelt.

"You shouldn't be playing. I send you both out on patrol to remark the border along Morningclan. They've recently been crossing over onto the dirt plains and we already have few cats as it is. Take anybody else you want." The black tom walked away.

"Who should we ask?" Tinyslip asked him.

"Maybe one of the new apprentices' mentors might want to have a chance to show them around the territory. You eat while I'll go talk to them."

"But you haven't eaten yet."

"I'll eat when we return." He padded across camp to find Burnpelt and Forestshadow. Tinyslip was left alone as she began to tear into the flesh of the dove that laid in front of her.

It wasn't long before Frogsplash came back with Forestshadow and Maplepaw. "Burnpelt was too stubborn to come, but we got Forestshadow and Maplepaw."

"Great! Let's head out."

They made their way out of the camp. Maplepaw asked so many questions about just about everything. Forestshadow was silently going crazy about the number of questions she asked.

Frogsplash was the one who took the lead of the patrol as he led them through the wet marshland until they entered the dusty and dry plains.

"Now this is what we call the dirt plains," Forestshadow began to inform Maplepaw. "There has been a lot of blood spilled here from many battles we've had with Morningclan to claim this territory."

"Why would anybody want this piece of land? I can't even smell any prey."

"That is because the mice are all underground because of how loud you are," Tinyslip told her.

"When it rains here there are a lot of worms that will come out of the ground. Morningclan uses them to catch fish. We like it because of all the mice and ravens that come here. It is a great territory when it is leaf-bare."

"Why do Morningclan eat fish? That sounds so gross. I can't imagine eating that."

"That was what their ancestors had eaten when the clans were first being formed here. Just like ours did when they settled here," Frogsplash said as he sat on top of one of the dirt piles.

"I couldn't imagine eating a fish," Maplepaw said, sticking her tongue out. "They sound so disgusting. Morningclan has a weird taste in prey."

"Let's continue marking the borders and then I can take you around the rest of the territory," Forestshadow said as he padded up to the edge of the dirt plains.

Tinyslip followed him and walked farther down the border before quickly marking it and joining her clanmates once again.

"Can we go see the Meadowclan border now? Will I see the Tall Stones from the border markers?" Maplepaw meowed as she continued with her questions.

"You guys can go. I'm going to finish up with Maplepaw's tour of the territory," Forestshadow said. They all dipped their head to one another before going their separate ways.

"Maplepaw is going to drive Forestshadow crazy. She will never stop asking questions about everything," Frogsplash said.

"I guess it could be worse. She isn't running off to go answer those questions herself," Tinyslip replied.

The two continued their way down through the forest to make their way back to camp and to report back to Shadowear.

Chapter 4

[image]

Ryepaw sat outside the medicine cat den. He watched his clanmates padded around the camp. Today was a peaceful day in the camp. Nothing interesting was happening.

Ryepaw stood up and padded back into the den. His mentor was sitting in the back pulling out all the dried up herbs.

"Ryepaw, we need to go out and collect some herbs before leaf-bare," the black cat murmured.

"What do we all need? I can go out now before all the patrols return," Ryepaw said as he sat down and began to lick his paw.

"We need some fresh stocks of coltsfoot and some dock leaves. I also want to get some catmint."

"I also saw that the feverfew and goldenrod were getting pretty low." He looked back and looked through the holes along the wall. He nodded his head.

"I head out now, Blackstep." With that Ryepaw made his way out of the den. He passed some of his clanmates as they said hello to the medicine cat apprentice.

Ryepaw made his way through the forest. He has been a medicine cat apprentice for a few moons now. As a kit, he always wished to be something different from his father, Rabbitstorm. He wanted to help others, unlike his father who tore him into pieces.

Ryepaw has blamed his father for the death of his mother. They were walking out by the river before Dawnpetal had slipped off the bank. Rabbitstorm hadn't tried to save the drowning she-cat. He told them that he didn't want to risk his life to save her so both of

them wouldn't die.

After the incident, Ryepaw hated his father, and soon after Rabbitstorm and Dewspring announced that they were mates. Now the two had their first litter of kits last moon. They had three kits named, Shinekit, Wildkit, and Badgerkit.

Ryepaw normally tried to avoid them, but whenever Dewspring was worried over them, Blackstep would send him over to check on them. Not very many words were exchanged between the two.

Ryepaw finally came across the river where the coltsfoot and the feverfew would grow the best. He came up and picked a few stems of the coltsfoot and carefully laid them down. He carefully picked the two herbs up in his jaw.

Next, he had to head down around Cottonclan's border to find the goldenrod. Meadowclan had gotten its name from all the grassy plains there were in the territory. Some days, the wind would be very strong, but the Meadowclan cats were slim and were used to the wind blowing through their fur.

Ryepaw ran along the plains as he saw a few familiar cats standing in the distance. He slowed down as he neared them. It was one of the border patrols that Plumbreeze, the Meadowclan deputy, had sent out earlier.

He noticed the four cats who were marking the borders. There was Crowglade, Bluemist, Moorpatch, and his apprentice Wolfpaw.

"Hey, Ryepaw. What are you doing out here?" Crowglade said as he noticed the apprentice running over the hill.

"Blackstep said we were running out of herbs, so I came out to restock them," Ryepaw replied as he dropped the herbs that were in his mouth.

"What is over here? Wolfpaw can carry it back for you so you don't have your paws full," Moorpatch asked.

"I'm just grabbing some goldenrod. I'm sure you know what it looks like."

"We'll keep a lookout as we finish the patrol. Wolfpaw will drop it off with Blackstep once we get back," Bluemist said.

"Thank you," Ryepaw dipped his head.

"Ryepaw one more thing," Wolfpaw said as she stepped over to the medicine apprentice. "Is there a proper way to carry them?"

"Just try not to crash the herbs in your jaw," he said.

They soon parted ways as Ryepaw went off to get the remaining herbs which were dock leaves and catmint. There was a special spot that the catmint grew in. It was around the mountains that the sacred hollow is located.

The sacred hollow is where the medicine cats go to communicate with Starclan. Starclan is the ancestors where the clan cats go once they die.

Ryepaw found the small area where the catmint grew. This was the only place that Ryepaw knew that grew catmint. If anything happened to this area, then Meadowclan won't have any supply of catmint, Ryepaw thought.

Ryepaw gathered the sweet-smelling leaves and headed over to gather the last herb that Blackstep needed before heading back to the camp.

~~~~~~~

Ryepaw entered back into the camp. He made his way over to the medicine cat's den and dropped the herbs that he was carrying. Blackstep just entered the den.

"I see you're back now. You were gone for a while," he murmured. He looked to see all the herbs that were gathered. "Where is the goldenrod? Did you forget where it was?"

"I came across one of the border patrols and they said they would grab some on their way back," Ryepaw replied.

Just then Moorpatch came into the den with Wolfpaw limping
~~~~~~~

after her. The brown tom was carrying the goldenrod that they promised to grab earlier.

"Wolfpaw ran into a bramble patch and got a thorn stuck in her paw," He exclaimed.

"I can take a look at it," Ryepaw said and the silver she-cat limped over to him.

Wolfpaw lifted her paw as Ryepaw took a look. There was a small thorn caught between her pads. Ryepaw leaned forward and grabbed onto the thorn with his teeth. He quickly pulled it out.

"Now lick the wound as I get something to put on it." Ryepaw went back and got some marigold. He lapped up the herb and chewed it into a poultice. He licked the juices into her paw.

"It feels better already," Wolfpaw's ears perked up. "You're a great medicine cat Ryepaw. I always thought you would become a warrior since we were kits, but this is what you're truly good at."

Wolfpaw was only one moon older than Ryepaw. She also has two littermates, Icepaw and Hazelpaw. Ryepaw never had any littermates so the other kits were the only cats to play with.

He and Wolfpaw were always close. They did just about everything as kits. They shared the same favorite prey and the same games. Their only difference was Wolfpaw wanted to become a warrior while Ryepaw wanted to become a medicine cat. The she-cat missed having her best friend with her, so she would be a normal visitor to the den. They also always shared tongues during sunhigh.

"How is your training going?" Ryepaw asked.

"Moorpatch is a great mentor. He doesn't get angry whenever I do something wrong. He only teaches me why I messed up. It beats Icepaw. She always complains about how Swiftcloud makes her work so hard. What about you? How is Blackstep?"

"He's a good medicine cat, but he can be quite reserved. It can get really quiet in here. It's why I like to spend my time out in the

clearing," Ryepaw chirped.

"Why don't we go get some prey. Sunhigh is just about to pass."

The two apprentices padded out of the den. They both glanced over to the freshkill pile before they chose to share thrush. They settled down in their usual spot. They each began to pull the feathers out to reach the actual meat of the thrush.

"Do you mind if we join you," they looked up and saw Icepaw and Hazelpaw standing there. Hazelpaw held a field mouse while Icepaw had a rabbit.

"Go ahead," Wolfpaw said to her littermates.

The two apprentices laid down and joined the two. They began to eat their own prey. Icepaw glanced over to Hazelpaw as they watched the two start to eat the thrush they got earlier.

"If Ryepaw wasn't a medicine cat, I'm sure the two of you would have been mates when you'd become warriors," Icepaw snickered.

"If only he wasn't. You two would make some cute kits," Hazelpaw squealed.

"I'd prefer to work in the medicine den. I don't want to get close to Rabbitstorm at all," Ryepaw growled.

"You're going to have to accept him some time. He is your father no matter what. Dawnpetal might have wanted him to move on when she died," Wolfpaw said.

"He isn't a loyal mate at all."

"But it has been some moons since the incident happened. The grief can't last forever," Icepaw said.

"He should have saved her. She was his mate. Most mates wouldn't think at all and just jump in to save them. He never loved her. As I kit I remember that he would never come around. I don't know a thing about him. Only that he is a terrible father."

"Actually, I've seen him visit Dewspring multiple times. He brings her prey all the time," Hazelpaw mentioned.

Ryepaw never noticed Rabbitstorm because he never wanted to look at him. The information hit him hard knowing that he never did anything for him and Dawnpetal.

"I don't care about him. I will never consider him as my father."

Chapter 5

[image]

Honeypaw padded out of the apprentices' den. The sun was only just beginning to rise from behind the trees. The birds began their morning song.

Honeypaw padded up to where her mentor was sitting. Heatherheart flickered her tail in joy as her apprentice walked up to her.

"It's nice to see you somewhat back to your normal self. There are times where you space out or give Barkpelt a dirty look, but you're keeping up with your training. With this, I want to give you your warrior's assessment today."

Honeypaw's expression changed. Her ears immediately perked up and her tail swished back and forth.

"I'm ready to become a warrior?" she said with a hint of excitement. Heatherheart nodded her head.

"You'll go out on the dawn patrol like I said yesterday and I'll give you some time to yourself before we'll start."

Honeypaw headed over to the entrance of the camp. The other members that were also in the patrol were already waiting. Spiderspot was the one who is leading the rest of us. Juniperslash, Pouncemist, and Mintpaw were the other cats on the patrol.

"You look ecstatic, Honeypaw," Mintpaw said to her. The orange and white she-cat was only four moons younger than Honeypaw. Her and her sister, Frostpaw, have only been training for two moons nows.

"Heatherheart said that I'll have my warrior's assessment today," Honeypaw told her.

"You'll make a wonderful warrior. I wish I could too. I still have many moons to train before I become a warrior."

"Both of you should stop chatting and focus because we're at the border now," Spiderspot hissed that them.

They both muttered an apology before going their separate ways. Honeypaw walked to the side of the border and quickly marked it before going down a little farther before repeating the same process.

"Can we stop and hunt real quick. I'm starving," Mintpaw asked her mentor, Pouncemist.

"We're on a border patrol. I'm sure the elder, queens, and kits are also hungry too."

"Do you think the hunting patrol will be back before us?"

"We left before them, so probably not." Mintpaw sighed as everyone gathered today to go to the next border. Honeypaw kept her distance from the chatty apprentice in order to keep herself out of trouble.

~~~~~~~

"I'll send you off into the territory by yourself. I and another cat will be secretly following you. We will watch as you hunt throughout the forest. Once you're hunting assessment is over we'll go and do your fighting assessment. But first, I want you to scent all the things around you. What can you pick up?"

Honeypaw raised her muzzle. She cracked her mouth open just a bit as all the scents from around the forest bathed on her tongue. "There is stale cat scent which could mean a patrol passed here earlier. There is also the scent of the Twoleg place. Lastly, there is a mouse over near that bush," she said as she flicked her tail over to the bush.

Heatherheart nodded her head in approval. "Now go off and hunt. We'll be keeping our eye on you."
~~~~~~~

Honeypaw bounded out into the forest. Remembering to keep her paw steps quiet. She stopped to scented the forest around her. She could only pick up the mouse from earlier which had already fled from under the bush. She headed farther through the woodlands. Her muzzle was kept raised in order to scent out any prey.

The apprentice dropped into a hunter's crouch once she spotted a squirrel nibbling on a seed. Its bushy tail flicked around from excitement. Little did it know of the hunter getting ready to pounce on it.

Once Honeypaw was at a good distance, she bunched up her hind legs and flew through the air. She landed squarely on top of the squirrel. Before it could escape, she quickly delivered the killing bite to its neck. She picked it up by its tail and buried it under one of the neighboring trees.

"One down and plenty more to go," she said to herself. Honeypaw's tail swished in enjoyment from the successful catch.

Not wasting time, she turned around and searched for more prey to being back to camp.

Honeypaw had successfully caught a bird and another squirrel to go along with the previous one. Heatherheart revealed herself from out of the shrubs. She shows impressed expression on her face.

"You've done great. I'll have Pebblewing take everything you've caught back to camp."

The light gray tom came out of the bushes. He was the father of Mintpaw and Frostpaw. He and his mate, Squirrelskip, are now back in the nursery with another litter of kits. He was also one of the younger warriors in the clan. Only older than Amberwish and Dustywing along with both of the queens, Squirrelskip and Poppymist.

"You'll make a wonderful warrior. Mintpaw and Frostpaw had someone good to look up too," He mumbled before gathering all the prey and padded up the trail back to camp.

"We'll do your battle assessment and I've asked Amberwish to help us. I didn't want the most experienced warrior to compete with you."

Amberwish was already waiting in the field. Her tail swished back and forth impatiently.

"I'm ready to show this apprentice what's up," She smirked. She crouched down ready to attack.

"You've only been a warrior two more moons than me. I remember defeating you many times as an apprentice. This won't be any difference," Honeypaw remarked. Amberwish hissed at her. Honeypaw crouched down, ready to show her strength.

"Remember to keep your claws sheathed. I don't want anyone getting hurt," Heatherheart exclaimed.

With the flick of her mentor's tail, the battle starting. Amberwish leaped first, but Honeypaw guesses the golden she-cat's first move, she rolled away. Honeypaw charges behind her and knocks her off her paws.

This starts to make Amberwish frustrated. She lashes out at Honyepaw's hind legs when the apprentice back away. The golden she-cat quickly made her move and pinned the cream she-cat.

Honeypaw went limp to confuse Amberwish. It luckily worked and she could easily knock her off. Honeypaw regained herself back onto her feet. She dodged the next attack from the warrior.

"You need to be faster to catch me," Honeypaw teases. Amberwish springs up and meets Honeypaw mid-air. They clash together, but Honeypaw was too small to push the warrior over.

Honeypaw crashes down to the ground. Amberwish was about to come down an top of her, but the apprentice moves to the side making the landing harder. Honeypaw leaps up and lands directly on Ambewish's back. The impact made the golden she-cat's paws slip out from under her.

"That's enough. I've seen enough," Heatherheart called out.

Honeypaw crawled off Amberwish's back. The two shake the sand out of their fur. "You've done very well. I think I'll report a good report back to Curlstar."

Honeypaw couldn't contain her excitement and leaped up and down. Amberwish snickered and was the first one to leave. Honeypaw and Heatherheart followed her not long after.

~~~~~~~

"I wish I could have seen Amberwish's face. No wonder she came in as grumpy as a badger. You must have gotten her good," Frostpaw says.

"She did get me a few times, but I quickly regained myself," Honeypaw told them. Her chest fur was puffed out.

When Mintpaw and Frostpaw became apprentices, Amberwish was made a warrior so they never got to train with the golden she-cat. She would only check up on them and constantly pointed out every little thing they did wrong even though they were newly apprenticed.

"May all cats old enough to catch prey, please join me in the hollow," Curlstar's mew rang throughout the camp.

"It is time," Honeypaw said.

Cats gathered in the hollow. Featherkit and Marigoldkit were held back in the nursery by their mother Poppymist. The two elders, Fuzzywhisker and Larkfeather, sat outside of their den. The rest sat in the hollow as Curlstar sat above everyone.

"Today we'll have one of our apprentices become a warrior. Heatherheart reported positive feedback from Honeypaw's assessment. Honeypaw, step forward."

Honeypaw made her way to the front. She stood in front of the light brown she-cat.

"I, Curlstar, leader of Cottenclan, call upon our warrior ancestors to look upon this apprentice. She has trained in the ways of your noble
~~~~~~~

code, and I command her a warrior in her turn. Do you, Honeypaw, promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even if it costs your life?" Curlstar said, looking down at her.

"I do," Honeypaw replied somewhat confidently.

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I shall give you your warrior name. Honeypaw from this moment on you'll be known as Honeysong. Starclan honors your speed and we welcome you as a full warrior of Cottenclan."

Curlstar came down and placed her nose on her shoulder. Honeysong licked it in respect and the clan erupted in cheers.

"Honeysong! Honeysong! Honeysong!"

Honeysong turned to face her clan. She couldn't feel happier in her entire life. This was the moment she's been working so hard to get all her life and now was the time that it finally happened.

Chapter 6

[image]

Ryepaw applied the last of the poultice onto Eagletail's shoulder. The warrior had previously come hopping in the medicine cats with a long wound across his shoulder. Apparently, the cream tom was patrolling along Cottenclan territory and a gorse bush scratched his shoulder.

"Thank you, Ryepaw. It feels a lot better now," The tom mewed. He gave the medicine cat apprentice a bright hearted smile.

"Just be sure to go easy on that leg. It wasn't deep, but it doesn't mean it couldn't reopen again," he told the warrior. Eagletail flicked his tail goodbye as he left the den.

"Warriors get hurt by the stupidest things," a voice behind Ryepaw said. He whipped around and saw his mentor Blackstep standing there. "Never look at where they are going."

"I guess their focus is on something else to notice their surroundings."

Blackstep grunted and turned back to the herb storage. "Tonight is a half-moon, so you might want to get ready to leave soon. I want to be there before moonhigh, unlike last time."

The last time they traveled to the Scared Hollow, a patrol had gotten back from a skirmish. They had to stay back for a bit to treat all the wounded cats. Once they finished, they quickly made their way to Scared Hollow. The other medicine cats were already sharing with Starclan. They quickly joined them next to Star Pond.

Ryepaw walked out of the den and towards the freshkill pile. He sniffed through it before getting a thrush. He dragged it along the ground and began to pluck the feathers in order to get the meat.

"You're sitting all alone. Mind if I join you?" Ryepaw glanced up and

saw Wolfpaw standing there. A rabbit hung from her jaws.

"I don't mind," Ryepaw exclaimed.

Wolfpaw settled next to the light brown tom. She dug into her freshkill as Ryepaw continued to get rid of the remaining feathers.

"Tonight is a half-moon. You're going to meet with the other medicine cats, right?" Wolfpaw asked.

"Yeah. We're getting ready to leave soon."

"What does Star Pond look like? I heard it's very beautiful."

"It is. You can see all the stars in the night sky being reflected on the pond. Around it are small white pebbles. They shine as well so you can see the small lilies that float in the pond."

"I wish I could see it. It sounds so beautiful. Sometimes when I see a pretty flower while patrolling, I'll get and bring it back to camp. My whole nest is decorated with them. Sadly they don't live forever."

"I can bring you one of the lilies while I'm there."

"You can't do that. Star Pond is a sacred place. They belong to Starclan. I couldn't possibly steal one of their flowers."

"I'll ask them if I could bring one back then. It won't be stealing then."

"Thank you, Ryepaw. You're so sweet." Wolfpaw rubbed their muzzles together. Ryepaw could feel his heartbeat quicken.

~~~~~~~

Ryepaw followed Blackstep up the rocks that lead to the entrance to Scared Hollow. Once they entered, only the medicine cat's from Marshclan were there.

"It's nice to see you, Gorseshine," Blackstep dipped his head to the gray spotted she-cat.
~~~~~~~

Ryepaw went up to the red she-cat sitting next to Gorseshine. "Hello, Robinpaw."

"How are you doing, Ryepaw? Is all well in Meadowclan?"

"Everything is well."

"I see the two of you aren't late this time," Gorseshine meowed.

"We had something that came up at the last second," Blackstep replied.

Gorseshine dipped her head as a white and golden tom came padding up to them.

"Welcome, Sunstep. It's nice to see you again," Blackstep said rubbing his muzzle with the Morningclan medicine cat.

Out of all the other medicine cats, Blackstep always was the closest to Sunstep. Blackstep was around when Sunstep was an apprentice. He helped train Sunstep a little bit as well when Morningclan's medicine cat had died before ever finishing his training. Blackstep took over to finish it off and gave Sunstep his full medicine cat name, in which he named him after himself.

"It is always nice to see you, Blackstep," the tom said.

"I wonder where Mouseshine is. Normally she is the first one here," Gorseshine said.

"Maybe something came up," Blackstep said.

Just then the small gray tabby she-cat hustled herself over to the group of cats.

"I'm sorry I'm late. Curlstar needed me to do something before I left," she said. "I got here as quickly as I could."

"Let's head down then," Sunstep said as he took the lead down the pathway that led to Star Pond.

Every time Ryepaw saw Star Pond, he couldn't get used to the

beautiful area. Any cat would love it here.

He laid his head next to the pond. He eyeballed one of the lilies flowing past. I hope I can bring one back to Wolfpaw. I give her anything to make her happy.

Ryepaw closed his eyes and felt himself leaving his body. When he woke up. It wasn't what he expected. Rain poured down harder than he's ever seen. The sky was almost black. Cats were running and hiding from the wind cloud that was pulling cats off their paws. Some went flying in the air and were eaten by the wind cloud.

As he watched, a voice ringed in his ear. "The clouds and wind come together as a great storm is formed. A cat of nectar can foresee the dangerous weather ahead. And a cat of the trees can walk the time of the ancestors. Together can save the fate of the clans."

His vision then went black. He was in Starclan's hunting-grounds now. A grayish-blue tom stood in front of him.

"It is nice to see you, Ryepaw," he said.

"What was that? Are the clans in danger?" Ryepaw frantically meowed.

"Sadly they are. It was why I had to show you what you just saw. I trust that you can deliver this to the others as soon as you can. It may be something that the clans might not survive."

"Who are you?" Was

"My name is Stormwind. I'm Bluemist's father."

"I promise to tell the other medicine cats," Ryepaw dipped his head to the Starclan cat. "I also have one more thing to ask."

"Make it quick. You're getting ready to wake up."

"Can I have one of the lilies from Star Pond?"

"Sure, the lilies mean nothing to some of the cats here. Some wish

to have them gone. Take one."

Ryepaw thanked him as he faded and woke up back in his own body one again.

The others were getting up. Ryepaw nosed his mentor's shoulder, to wake the old black tom.

"What is it, Ryepaw?" he grumbled as he rose to his feet.

"Starclan shared something very important to me. I need to tell you. I promise him I would."

"You know the rules."

"This is severe."

"Let him if it is this bad," Mouseshine mewed. Blackstep nodded his approval to the apprentice.

"I received a prophecy. It was terrible. It was raining so hard and the wind was carrying the cats in the air."

"This already sounds like a silly dream," Blackstep mumbled.

"It was true. One of the Starclan cats said that this could destroy the clans. Two cats were named that could help save us saying, A cat of nectar can foresee the dangerous weathers ahead. And a cat of the trees can walk the time of the ancestors. Together can save the fate of the clans."

They all stood there in silence, not knowing what to say. It felt uneasy. It was hard to believe that the wind could carry cats in the air.

"I guess if he spoke to a Starclan cat then it must be true. We have to find the cat of nectar and cat of the trees. They are the only way we can stay safe from this great storm," Sunstep said.

"It could be any cat. A cat from the clans or one from outside. I say we look in the clans first," Gorseshine meowed.

"We must tell our leaders first. Next gathering we can discuss the best way to handle it," Blackstep said.

They all dipped their heads and everyone began to pad out of the den. Ryepaw looked back at the lilies flowing in the pond. He reached out and clipped the stem with his claws before gently carrying it out of Scared Hollow.

"What is that?" Blackstep questioned him.

"A lily. I said I would give it to them as a present," Ryepaw smiled.

It was a quiet walk back to Meadowclan territory. Ryepaw had a huge grin on his face the whole way back. The lily hung from his jaws as the remaining water droplets fell to the ground. She is going to be so happy that I was able to bring one back to her. His tail swished excitedly.

Chapter 7

[image]

Tinyslip dropped the couple pieces of prey onto the prey pile. She had just come back from hunting alone while Frogsplash was out patrolling the borders.

Marshclan was really quiet these days. Everyone kept to themselves. The only noise was from Creampaw and Maplepaw playing with each other next to the apprentices' den. They were practicing the fighting moves that they learned earlier today.

Tinyslip laid down under the sun. She rolled onto her back to warm her stomach up. She accidentally landed in one of the mud puddles near the river. She was drying off before she began to clean herself.

It was almost sunhigh when Newtleaf ran into camp.

"We are being invaded at the Morningclan border. They are trying to take the Dirt Plains," the white she-cat called.

Flamestar exited from his den. He began to call out warriors to go and fight off the Morningclan cats.

"Dawnberry, Yellowflight, Darkwhisper, and Tinyslip go with Newtleaf," the dark reddish-brown tom yowled.

Tinyslip rose to her feet as she and the rest of the warriors called, followed Newtleaf out of camp and they took off towards the Dirt Plains. They dodged the pine trees before coming to the clearing.

They could already hear the yowling cats as they fought one another. Tinyslip hurdles herself into the battle. She lands next to a black tom. She quickly pushes the tom off her clanmate. Spottedheart dipped her head thanks before the two she-cats began to attack the tom.

"These lands belong to Morningclan," the tom growled.

"They have always belonged to Marshclan. Don't you have enough prey in the river?" Spottedheart hissed back.

The tom launched himself at the she-cat, but Tinyslip knocked him out of the air. He skidded across the ground. He pulled himself up back onto his feet, but Spottedheart leaped onto his back. He hissed when her claws sank into his skin.

The tom rolled over to knock her off his back. Tinyslip clawed at his ears as she felt her claws tear away a piece. The tom hissed again before turning around and leaving them.

Tinyslip looked around. Most of the Morningclan cats were fleeing as they ran off back over the hill to their territory. Only a few remained and fought, but it wasn't long before the Morningclan deputy, Shimmersky, called for them to retreat.

The Marshclan cats rejoiced at their victory. They all made their way back to camp. Gorseshine and her apprentice, Robinpaw, made their way around to apply a poultice to everyone's wounds.

Frogsplash paced over to her. He looked around her pelt to check for her wounds.

"I'm glad you didn't get too injured. I saw you helping Spottedheart fight off Ravenfall," he told her.

"Did you get hurt?" she asked him. He only shook his head and just flicked his ear. Only a small portion of his ear was nicked away.

"Why don't we go to eat something and get some rest. The Gathering is tomorrow. We should be in our best condition if Flamestar decides to bring us along."

Tinyslip and Frogsplash each chose a piece of prey and settled down and began to eat.

Creampaw and Maplepaw came running over to them. They were bouncing around in excitement.

"Tell us all about the battle with Morningclan. Don't leave out any detail," Creampaw exclaimed.

"Well, I just arrived and I saw Spottedheart pinned by a Morningclan tom. I rushed in to save her. We ended up giving him scars to remember us by," Tinyslip says.

"Where there many Morningclan warriors?" Maplepaw asked. Her ear flicked in excitement.

"There were some. Not too many though."

"I wish we could have gone and fought. We just learned some cool moves from Burnpelt and Forestshadow today. I could have shown those Morningclan cats something," Maplepaw said as she slashed her front paw out.

"You both have hardly any training. Those Morningclan cats could have beat you with one paw," Frogsplash smirked.

"I like to see them try," Creampaw boasted.

"Why don't you two go off and see if your mentors need anything else. You also might want to go rest. You both might get to go to the Gathering," Frogsplash told them.

They jumped up and ran off to their mentors as they finished off eating their prey. Tinyslip followed her father into the warrior's den. They curled up next to each other in their nests.

She closes her eyes as she lets the darkness take her.

~~~~~~~

It was sunset now. Flamestar was about to announce the cats that were going to the Gathering. Everyone was gathered in the clearing waiting.

The dark reddish-brown tom crept out of his den with Shadowear right after him. The leader stood in front of everyone.

"I have spoken with Shadowear and we've decided on who to
~~~~~~~

bring with us to the Gathering. Treestripe, Burnpelt, Forestshadow, Yellowflight, Frogsplash, Tinyslip, Newtleaf, Creampaw, Maplepaw, and our elders are always welcomed to join us. Dawnberry, Spottedheart, and Darkwhisper will stay here and watch over camp."

The cats leaving gathered around the entrance of the camp. Maplepaw was bouncing around Forestshadow. The black tom continued to tell her to calm down.

"It feels like it has been a while since I've gone to the Gathering," Frogsplash said.

"We didn't go the last moon," she replied.

As they were heading out, Newtleaf slipped over next to Frogsplash. She made sure that their furs brushed together.

"I thought I told you that I didn't want to become your mate," the gray splotched tom told the white she-cat.

"Who said anything about that. I just was walking," she meowed.

Frogsplash moved away from her, but she continually kept getting closer to the tom.

Tinyslip moved back and pushed herself in between the two cats. Newtleaf gave her a small hiss before moving away from the two.

"She just needs to take a hint. I don't want another mate. My loyalty is to Nightpath. I don't want to pick between two she-cats once I go into Starclan."

"Let's not talk about that now," Tinyslip stopped her father. She didn't want to think about the day her father won't be here. It is too painful to think about. She already had it with her mother.

"I just have one wish before I go," he murmured to her. She pricked her ears to listen.

"I want you to find a mate so you won't be lonely when I'm gone. You will need someone to comfort you as I did with your mother."

"I'm still too young to find a mate."

"I'm just saying. It doesn't have to be now. It is just my wish before I join Starclan." Tinyslip shut her mouth. She wanted to stop the conversation.

They arrived at Tall Stones. Cats broke away as they went to have conversations with other clans.

Tinyslip stayed next to her father as usual. As they waited for Cottenclan to arrive two Morningclan cats came up to Tinyslip.

"Hey, Tinyslip. Do you remember us?" They asked. She shook her head.

"Streampaw and Riverpaw, well we're Streamsong and Riverstripe now," the silver she-cat said.

"We were the only apprentices in the clans," Tinyslip said.

"We probably shouldn't be talking to you because of yesterday, but we saw you and wanted to say hi," Riverstripe said.

"It was nice to see you again," Streamsong mewed.

"You too," Tinyslip said and dipped her head to the two Morning clan warriors.

"When did you meet those two?" Frogsplash asked.

"Their mentors introduced us when it was their first Gathering. I never hung out with them after. They would say hi a few times."

Cottenclan made their way into the clearing. Curlstar leaped up next to the other leaders along the Tall Stones.

"May the Gathering begin," Cheetahstar called. Cats settled down into their spots. "I guess I shall go first. Meadowclan's prey has been striving. We also got to welcome a new litter of kits. Rabbitstorm and Dewspring had a healthy litter of three. They've decided to call them Wildkit, Badgerkit, and Shinekit."

Tinyslip could hear a snicker coming from the medicine cat's circle. Blackstep smacked his apprentice in his head with his tail.

Cheetahstar stepped back as Flamestar moved forward. "Yesterday we had an unexpected attack at the Dirt Plains. Luckily my warriors defeat the intruders with minor injuries." Flamestar glanced over at Lionstar. "A new kit was born to Fernstep and I. He is called Brackenkit. We also had two new apprentices, Maplepaw and Creampaw."

The clans called out the new apprentice's names. Morningclan was the only one silent. The two had their fur puffed out with their heads high.

Curlstar moved to the front. "Cottonclan is doing well. We haven't had any new kits, we do have a new warrior. Honeysong has successfully passed her warrior's assessment and become a full warrior."

The clans chanted her name out. Tinyslip could see the cream tabby she-cat sat over on the other side. She didn't look like she cared about getting her full warrior's name.

The last leader was Lionstar. The big orange tom came forward. "Since nobody is talking about this then I will," he spoke. The other cats looked around confused about what the leader was talking about.

"The medicine cats were given a prophecy. It said a storm was coming our way. We need to discuss this before it happens. That is why Starclan sends us prophecies before they actually happen."

"Why is he saying this? We agree to talk about it at the next Gathering," the medicine cats exclaim.

"I didn't know he was going to say something. We only talked about it for a little bit. He never said anything about talking with the other clans," Sunstep defended.

"It was our medicine cat apprentice who had the vision," Cheetahstar said. "We decided to talk about this another time. It is

too soon. We need more information."

"Starclan gave it to him so we can start discussing what it means now, not later."

"What is the prophecy?" One of the cats shouted from the crowd.

Cheetahstar turned to her medicine cats. Blackstep looked down at his apprentice. The light brown tom just waved his tail. Blackstep looked up at his leader and nodded his head.

"The clouds and wind come together as a great storm is formed. A cat of nectar can foresee the dangerous weather ahead. And a cat of the trees can walk the time of the ancestors. Together can save the fate of the clans," Blackstep recited the prophecy.

"Why don't we give time to speak with the medicine cats some more. We can discuss the next gathering when we have some ideas about everything," Curlstar spoke out. Cheetahstar nodded her head, but Flamestar hesitated but nodded his head.

Lionstar was about to say something, but Shimmersky spoke out first.

"We'll wait until next time when we speak with Sunstep some more." Lionstar glared at his deputy but didn't say anything.

"I think this concludes the gathering," Flamestar says. The leaders begin to round up their clans and make way back to their camps.

Chapter 8

[image]

Pinekit scurried around the camp. The cats from the gathering should be coming back into camp any time now. He wanted to know everything that went on. He had to prepare himself for when it was his turn to go to Tall Stones.

Lionstar was the first one who appeared back into the camp. His fluffy orange fur stood out in the bright moonlight. The rest of the cats began to pile in. Some went off to get their sleep for the night.

Pinekit looked around and saw Tawnypaw and Snowpaw following their mentors at the end of the crowd. He dashed forward. His ears perked up in excitement to see them.

"Pinekit, what are you doing still awake? Berrypool is going to have your tail when she finds out you're still awake," Snowpaw scolds.

"She said I could wait until you all got back because I kept Cloverkit and Sandykit awake," he replied.

"Well, we want to go and get some sleep. It was a long night," Tawnypaw yawns as the two began to pad off before Pinekit jumps in front of them and blocks their path.

"I want to know everything that happened at the gathering. Please tell me."

"We want to get some rest," Snowpaw says. "We can tell you tomorrow."

"You might forget in the morning. Please just tell me."

"You're too young to be knowing everything at the gathering. It will be your turn soon enough, little one." Pinekit turns around and

sees Ottersplash towering over him.

"But I'm five moons now and almost six. I'll be an apprentice soon. I want to know so I'll be ready for when I go."

"Your mentor will tell you everything when the time comes. Just worry about other things. Go run off to the nursery. I heard Berrypool calling for you not too long ago."

With that, Pinekit's tail dropped and slid across the ground as the brown kit made his way back to the nursery. Berrypool stood at the entrance and nudged him into the den.

"You got to see them come back. Now it is time to sleep. You can ask all the questions you want in the morning," she says.

Sandykit and Cloverkit were already passed out in the moss bed. Pinekit curls up next to them. Berrypool's tail wrapped around the three kits.

Pinekit let out a small sigh and tried to fall asleep, but he was too curious about the gathering. Some of the warriors were still sitting in the clearing as they murmured quiet words to one another.

Pinekit tilted his ear to make out some of the words they were discussing.

"I wonder if a big storm is actually going to come or that Meadowclan medicine apprentice was just describing a nightmare he had," Riverstripe was saying to his sister, Streamsong.

"He should be able to tell the difference between a prophecy and a nightmare for the amount of training he has already been through. It just seems weird that Starclan told a medicine cat apprentice instead of a fully trained one," the silver she-cat said.

So there was a prophecy mentioned at the gathering. I missed so much. Why would nobody tell me, Pinekit thought to himself.

"I guess two cats are supposed to have some sort of power to help us."

"I haven't put together who those cats are, but one of them might be in Morningclan."

"Or those cats are ones that we haven't met yet. They could be kittypets or rouges. Maybe even a litter of kits that haven't been born yet."

"I doubt that. They wouldn't tell us this early then. The kits would be of no help."

Riverstripe just shrugged as the two littermates padded off to the warrior's dens.

Pinekit laid his head back down since they left. Thoughts kept running through his head about the two prophesied cats that Riverstripe and Streamsong mentioned. *I wonder what powers they have.*

After a while, Pinekit started to feel his body shut down, getting ready to fall asleep. He closed his eyes just as darkness overtook his body and he was in a peaceful sleep.

~~~~~~~

"Pinekit, wake up." Paws pressed against the brown kit's stomach. He turned around to remove the feet. "It is morning." Pinekit blinked his eyes open and saw Sandykit right in his face.

"I'm awake already," he yawned. He rose to his feet and stretched his stiff muscles out.

"The dawn patrol has already left. Rowanfrost promised us that he would teach us a few battle moves once he gets back from training with Foxpaw," Cloverkit's meow sounded behind him.

Pinekit sprang onto his feet and padded out of the den. His two littermates followed right after him.

Most of the cats were already out doing their own duties for the day. Lionstar was speaking with Sunstep. The two were littermates who were born to one of the senior warriors named Littlestep. Their father was already a member of Starclan and some cats believe that
~~~~~~~

Littlestep would retire off to the elders' den soon.

"Guess what! I heard a couple of the warriors talking about last night when the gathering ended!" Pinekit huddled with his two littermates. Their ears perked up at the interesting news. "Apparently one of the medicine cats had a prophecy. A great storm is supposed to come and two cats are prophesied to help all the clans."

"Maybe I might be one of them," Cloverkit said as her fur puffed out in front of her.

"I don't think so because I'm one of the cats," Sandykit mewed.

"That isn't it. The cats are said to have some sort of powers that Starclan has given them," Pinekit interrupted the two.

"I might have some sort of power. Did you hear what they were?" Sandykit asked. Pinekit only shook his head. "Maybe Tawnypaw might tell us."

They looked over and saw the tortoiseshell she-cat pad out of the den. Her fur was neatly groomed. The three kits scrambled over to her and began to bombard her with questions.

"Tawnypaw can you tell us about the gathering?"

"Remember what Ottersplash told you last night, Pinekit. This isn't something kits should be worrying about. You'll get to know once you're old enough," she remarked.

"But we're almost six moons," Cloverkit whined.

"Then you'll know then." She padded off to find her mentor who was waiting at the camp entrance. The three kits pouted.

"I guess we'll never know," Cloverkit sighed.

A loud meow rang across the camp. Berrypool spirited across the camp over to the medicine cat's den. Sunstep followed the flame-point she-cat as he carried herbs in his mouth.

"It must be Lilywhisker. She might be having her kits," Sandykit said as the three ran over to see what was happening, they were stopped by Littlestep.

"You need to wait outside. Berrypool is helping Sunstep with Lilywhisker's kitting. You can go in there once they've settled down," she said and scooted them away from the den.

"We never get to know anything when we're kits," Pinekit huffed.

"I can't wait until we've become apprentices. They will actually respect us a bit more," Sandykit says. The three huddled together in the corner of the camp.

"We'll become apprentices soon. We'll be the best. Nobody will be able to defeat us once we become warriors," Cloverkit chanted.

It took almost the entire day before Lilywhisker was done with the kitting. Birchclaw, who was mates with Lilywhisker, was fetched from a patrol.

This time the clan knew who the father was. Nobody knew of Foxpaw's father. Some believed Lilywhisker had an affair with a cat outside the clans or she and Birchclaw were together, but never made it known to everyone.

The queen ended up having two kits. One dark brown tom named Dustkit and a red tabby tom named Applekit. They were very loud. They would never stop mewing in the middle of the night. Pinekit had to stuff his ears with moss to drown out the sound.

"Were we like that when we were kits?" Cloverkit asked Berrypool when they were trying to sleep in the middle of the night.

"Foxpaw would try to leave you three out in the den to get some sleep. Luckily I woke to find you all gone. You were all crying and came and brought you back. Foxpaw got a huge scolding for that," Berrypool told them. "You all will be leaving me tomorrow though. You've all grown so fast. You'll be six moons and ready to move out of the nursery."

"We'll be the best apprentices ever!" Pinekit shouted but was quieted by Berrypool. She pointed over to Lilywhisker who was curled up fast asleep with her two kits curled into her side.

"I know you three will be amazing warriors. I've known ever since you were first kitted. You'll make me and Rowanfrost proud, right?"

The three kits nodded their heads eagerly as they rested their heads, ready for the day that awaited them tomorrow.

Chapter 9

[image]

Today was a big day for Wolfpaw and her littermates. They are getting ready to go off on their warrior assessments. They've reached the time that their mentors thought it was a good time for them to become warriors.

Ryepaw shared a rabbit with Wolfpaw not too long ago. He watched the silver she-cat stand at the entrance of the camp. Moorpatch was discussing the things she would have to do in her assessment.

Right before she was going to leave, she glanced at Ryepaw. He flicked his tail to wish her good luck. She dipped her head and padded out of the camp.

Ryepaw stayed there for a bit longer until he felt tiny paws pouncing on his tail. He turned around to find Wildkit, Badgerkit, and Shinekit playing with his tail. His anger immediately rose in his chest. He shot his tail away from the kits before stomping away.

He made his way into the medicine cats den. Blackstep was taking a nap after staying up all night watching Windbreeze. The white she-cat had come in the following day with a fever. It ended up being a lot worse. She had an infection in a cut she got from a thorn. She believed it was going to heal on its own. Her littermates, Plumbreeze and Swiftcloud, have been in and out of the den to check on her.

"We're getting a little low on feverfew. Most of it is going to Windbreeze. Can you go retrieve some for me?" Blackstep said. Ryepaw nodded his head and went out of the den.

The three kits were playing out next to the den. Their mother, Dewspring, was sitting outside watching them. Rabbitstorm

groomed her fur.

Ryepaw grumbled at the sight. He couldn't stand Rabbitstorm. He just looked away, passing by without even caring.

He made his way through the moor to the best spot where the feverfew grows. He caught a familiar scent. He followed it and peered through the heather. Wolfpaw was hunting a swallow.

Since it was a bird, she couldn't chase after it or it'll just fly away. She stalked it slowly before she was at a good distance to pounce on the bird. She made the finishing bite. The swallow went limp in her jaws. She carried it off to bury it so no animals would take it.

Ryepaw remembers the herb so he took off down the moor to the patch of feverfew. He got a few stems before making his way back up.

As he passed the spot where Wolfpaw was, he checked to see if the silver she-cat was still there. There wasn't a trace of her. His tail fell in disappointment and he continued back to the camp.

He stored the herbs away but kept a few for Windbreeze to have now. He gave her a couple and watched as she lapped them up.

"Can you get me some water? My mouth feels really dry," the white she-cat asked. Ryepaw dipped his head and got a mossball. In the back of the den, there was a small puddle of water that leaked through from the ground. When it rains they especially get lots of water to come through. When a drought happens they have to go down to the lake in order to have water for the sick cats.

He filled the mossball up and padded back. He dropped it next to her as she lifted her head and began to lick at the ball to retrieve the water that was kept inside.

Ryepaw went out to the freshkill pile. He grabbed a small rabbit for her. Sometimes Swiftcloud or Plumbreeze would bring prey for Windbreeze, but the two were off on patrols, so Ryepaw decided to do it himself.

"What is it like being a medicine cat?" He turned and saw Mossykit sitting there. Her eyes sparkled in curiosity.

"It is nice to take care of my clanmates," he replied.

"But fighting and hunting sound so much better. I don't want to be cooped up in camp all day."

"But I don't stay in the camp. I go out to collect herbs or just for a peace walk. Plus I have to go to the Sacred Hollow every half-moon."

"Mossykit, you get back here so I can fix your fur. I want you to look perfect for your ceremony," Brightfeather, Mossykit's mother, called out. The light brown tom-kit walked away back off to the nursery.

Not only was it Wolfpaw's warrior ceremony today, but Mossykit reached six moons and was becoming an apprentice.

The day was going by and before Ryepaw knew it, Wolfpaw arrived back with Icepaw and Hazelpaw at her side. The three quickly ran over to Ryepaw, who was sitting outside enjoying the last bits of sunlight before the moon would take over.

"We did it, Ryepaw! We passed our assessments!" Icepaw cheered.

"I'm so glad. I was sure you all would do it," Ryepaw felt a purr rumbled in his throat.

As they talked, Cheetahstar headed to the clearing and called for a clan meeting. Drizzlefrost and Whitefire, Wolfpaw, Icepaw, and Hazelpaw's parents, congratulated their kits before taking a seat in the very front. Their tails twined together.

Ryepaw ran over to sit down. Blackstep joined him right next to him. Their furs brushed together.

"I see you're really close with Wolfpaw," the black tom said.

"We grew up together in the same den. She is only a moon older

than me," Ryepaw replied.

"I hope you're not thinking of becoming anything more. You knew it is against the medicine cat code."

"I know and I wasn't planning on to." Ryepaw felt his heart drop after he said that. He didn't know why, but he felt hurt inside. He tucked away his feelings when the meeting began.

"Cats of Meadowclan, we have exciting news that awaits us. Mossykit please step forward," Cheetahstar's voice rang through the camp.

The light brown kit came forward. He sat down in front of the crowd. He was fidgeting all around too excited to finally become an apprentice after all these moons.

"You've reached the age of six moons and are ready to receive your apprentice name. Crowglade you'll take on Mossypaw as your new apprentice."

The black tom padded forward and touched their noses together to symbolize acceptance. They headed back into the crowd together to watch the next ceremony.

"Now I'll have Icepaw, Hazelpaw, and Wolfpaw come forward." The three she-cats all went forward. Their pelts were slick down from their quick grooming before it was their turn. "You've all passed your warrior assessments and are ready to become full warriors. I, Cheetahstar, leader of Meadowclan call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these three apprentices. They have trained hard to learn the way of your noble code and now I command them as a warrior in your turn. Hazelpaw, Icepaw, and Wolfpaw do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to defend your clan, even if it costs your life?"

They took turns, each replying back with a, "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I shall give you your warrior names." Cheetahstar leaped down to stand in front of the three apprentices. "Hazelpaw from this moment on you'll be known as

Hazelflower. Starclan honors your cleverness and we welcome you as a full warrior of Meadowclan"

The tabby she-cat licks her shoulder before the leader moves onto the next cat. "Icepaw you'll be known as Iceleap. Starclan honors your determination and we welcome you as a full warrior of Meadowclan." The same process happened as Iceleap licked Cheetahstar's shoulder.

"Wolfpaw you'll be known as Wolfshine. Starclan honors your thoughtfulness and we welcome you as a full warrior of Meadowclan." Wolfshine happily licks the brown tom's shoulder.

The clan erupted in cheers. They called out each of the newly made warriors' names. "Wolfshine! Iceleap! Hazelflower!"

Ryepaw raced over to Wolfshine. A bright smile on his face. "I can't believe you're a warrior now. Congratulations!"

"Thank you. Now it is your turn to get your full medicine cat name," Wolfshine says.

"It might take me a few more moons before that happens. I still have some things to learn first."

"You all are full warriors now. I dreamed of this day ever since you were born," Drizzlefrost came over to her three kits. Whitefire was right behind her. "You all received amazing names as well."

"We are proud of you." Whitefire nuzzled all three of them. "You must start to prepare for your vigil. Tomorrow you'll be accepted as warriors of Meadowclan."

"We'll be amazing warriors," Iceleap said.

As the moon started to shine in the sky, cats retreated to their dens. Wolfshine, Iceleap, and Hazelflower stayed out to hold their vigil in silence.

Chapter 10

[image]

Honeysong crouched down and began to stalk the mouse that was nibbling at the ground ahead of her. She made sure to step lightly as she came closer. Making sure her paws were ready to leap. Honeysong flew through the air and came down right on top of the mouse. She had it in her mouth as she killed it swiftly.

"That was some fine hunting," Dustywing said as he popped out of the bushes.

"I've hunted many times before. You've seen me also when I was an apprentice. Frostpaw and I normally trained together," Honeysong remarked.

"I know. I just wanted to compliment you." With that, the black tom padded away in the bushes.

Frostpaw popped up next to Honeysong. "I think he likes you. He is making it very obvious."

"I don't think so. He just complimented me, nothing else." She took the mouse and went off to uncover the rest of her prey she previously caught.

"He's been my mentor for a while now and I know he's never acted like that around any other cat before." The white she-cat popped up again.

"I still don't think he likes me."

"You should give him a chance."

"Frostpaw, I've just become a warrior and you're asking me to become mates with your mentor. My focus now is on my duties and not to be pampered by some tom."

"Think about it for later on." She trotted ahead of Honeysong with

her tail dragging behind her. Is she upset that I wouldn't ask Dustywing to be my mate? She'll understand when she's a warrior. She only has a couple of moons before then.

Honeysong padded into camp. She dropped her prey in the freshkill pile. She saw Barkpelt off on the side talking with Pouncemist. She felt a hiss rumble in her throat. She turned her head not wanting to look at him.

"Can we please learn some battle moves now? I'm ready to Meadowclan warriors anytime," the little tortoiseshell apprentice meowed. Featherkit and Marigoldkit had received their apprentice names. Amberwish was mentoring Marigoldpaw while Spiderspot was mentoring Featherpaw.

"You don't even know how to hunt properly. How can you expect to defend your clan if you can't feed them?" Spiderspot growled at Featherpaw.

"I caught a shrew this morning."

"After missing the previous two catches. We can go out tomorrow only if you prove to me that you can feed your clan. I want enough prey to feed the elders." She nodded confidently as the two padded out of camp.

"Honeysong, have you seen my new siblings?" Mintpaw comes rushing over.

"No. Kits aren't really for me," she replied.

"Come on." Mintpaw pushed the cream warrior over to the nursery. Last night, Squirrelskip kitted three little kits. "This she-cat is Sweetkit and the two toms are Thistlekit and Emberkit."

"It is nice to have small bundles next to me," Squirrelskip said, nuzzling into the kit's fur. "I remember having you and Frostpaw. You two were a lot quieter than they are. Honeysong was happy that she could sleep well every night."

Honeysong didn't want to bug the queen any longer so she excused herself and came out of the nursery.

"Cute, aren't they? I can't wait until I have some of my own. I'll be the best father ever," Dustywing meow sounded next to her. Honeysong didn't pay any attention to the tom and walked right past him. "Hey, are you feeling alright?"

"I'm perfectly fine," she hissed at him. He backed away and left her alone for the day.

She saw the setting sun and made her way into the warriors' den for the night. She curled up in her moss nest and closed her eyes. She let the darkness consume her.

~~~~~~~

Honeysong woke up, but she wasn't in her nest. Winds pushed past her. It was so strong that she could hardly keep her paws on the ground. Leaves were scattered all on the ground beside her. It looked like it was leaf-fall even though it was actually new-leaf now.

What is happening? I've never since this before, she thought to herself. She scrambled over to hollow in the ground to shelter herself. The trees above her swad in the wind. Their limbs started to break off and they flew around in the air.

Honeysong dug her claws in the ground to keep her there. She was luckily successful and moved into the forest. She saw something that blew her mind. Trees had come out of the ground and laid on the ground.

Honeysong then lost her grip on the forest floor. The wind carried her up in the sky. She felt herself fly away from the ground. Her legs scrambled around to try and get a grip on anything around her.

Starclan save me! The cream-tabby could hear yowls from all around her. She looked up and saw other cats flying around in the sky too.

She continued to be flung around. She was then pulled to the side at the same time as a tree limb came over to her and she slammed her head right into it. Her vision went black.
~~~~~~~

Honeysong woke up. She felt her stomach move in and out rapidly. She looked around and saw that she was back in the warrior's den. She let out a sigh in relief.

"Are you okay?" Barkpelt meowed. He stood at the front of the den. His pelt was neatly groomed recently.

"Don't talk to me," she hissed at him. "You're not worried about me at all."

"Honeysong, you're my kit. Of course, I'm worried about you."

"Then why did you leave me alone after Sunmist died. I was broken too and you just abandoned me. You didn't care for me at all."

"I just needed time away from everyone."

"Liar! I don't believe anything that you say. Don't ever speak to me ever again! I don't care if you're worried about me or not. Just leave me alone!"

"Can you not argue in the warrior's den. Some of us are trying to sleep," Timberfang called out from his nest.

Honeysong apologized and padded away. She went up to Heatherheart, who was getting ready to call out the patrols.

"Is everything okay, Honeysong?" she asked.

"No, I don't want to deal with Barkpelt, but he just had to make some comment to me. I'm already stressing about Dustywing being up my tail all the time. He just won't stop mooning over me. I also had the strangest dream last night on top of all the other things."

"Toms can be different from us, but we have to deal with them. Just calm down and after I call out the patrols, we can sit down and talk." The cream-tabby just nodded her head and watched her former mentor walk off.

Honeysong waited as Heatherheart called out all the cats for the patrols. It wasn't long before she came back over and they went to a quiet spot away from everyone.

"Now what is the first thing that is troubling you?" the orange and black she-cat asked.

"It is Dustywing. Frostpaw commented on him liking me. I pushed it away but as the day went on, he would just do anything to care or mention the future. Mintpaw took me to see the new kits and when I left, he appeared and said that he can't wait to be a father someday."

"I believe Dustywing is mooning over you. Do you return any feelings to him?"

"I don't want to think about that. My main focus is my clan. It wasn't long ago before I became a warrior. I want to work to improve myself before taking on any mates. I just don't want anybody close to me to leave me again."

"Tell him that you're not interested right now. He should lay off of you until you make up your mind. I think you're right about focusing on your clan first. That is what any new warrior should do. What else is there? I heard you and Barkpelt yelling at each other earlier."

"I had a weird dream last night and when I woke up, he asked if I was okay. I told him that why is he caring if all these moons he hasn't spared a glance at me. He just said he was worried and I went all out on him saying that why did he care now and not back then when Sunmist died."

Heatherheart placed her tail on her back to comfort the warrior. "He is still your father. I'm sure he'll be a little worried about you. He may not have shown it to you until now."

"I just don't want to deal with him. I've never cared about him ever since I was an apprentice and I will still not care now."

"Whatever you want. I can't force you to do anything. How about you can lead a border patrol at moonrise. That should take your mind off things. It'll also be the first time you've ever done it."

"Really! Thank you, Heatherheart. I'm glad that I have someone like

you that I can rely on."

"I'm always happy to help you."

Honeysong padded back to the camp. She felt a lot better at getting everything off her chest. She had always seen Heatherheart as a motherly figure ever since Sunmist died. She was grateful for the deputy to be by her side.

Chapter 11

[image]

Pinepaw followed Stormwhisker through the forest. Just yesterday, Pinepaw and his littermates received their apprentice names. They were out for Pinepaw to practice his hunter's crouch.

"Most kits will start to learn this as soon as they can walk. I want to see your crouch. We'll learn how to fish later but I want you to learn this before you get into the water," Stormwhisker said. He said in front of the brown apprentice with his tail wrapped around neatly in front of his paws. He waited until Pinepaw got himself situated.

"Is this correct?" he asked.

"Your tail needs to be lowered but not touching the ground. If you swish your tail on the leaves, the prey will hear it and take off before you can even leap. Try again."

Pinepaw lowered his tail. He moved his feet to make it a comfortable position. Stormwhisker hovered over him and corrected any mistakes that Pinepaw made.

"Now that is a hunter's crouch." He moved a leaf out in front of the apprentice. "Now I want you to leap on this leaf. Your paws should land right in the center in order for it not to get loose."

Pinepaw started to tense his legs to get ready to leap. At the right moment, he sprang up and flew through the air. He landed a bit over the leaf.

"You jumped too far. Try again but use your eyes to aim your distance better."

Pinepaw kept trying over and over until his mentor approved of it. By that time, the moon was coming up in the sky. Stormwhisker called it a day and they trotted back to camp.

Pinepaw walked in and saw his littermates next to the apprentices' den. They had a few fish over there. He ran over to join them. Sandypaw scooted over one of the fish for Pinepaw to eat.

"How was your training today?" she asked.

"Stormwhisker knows what he's doing, but I didn't get it until we were getting ready to head back," Pinepaw said sadly.

"Ravenfall said I had a lot to learn as well. That I might be a better fighter than a hunter."

Birchclaw said I was a natural hunter. I learned it so fast that we went out hunting and I almost caught a bird, but I didn't see a stick that was under my paws," Cloverpaw bragged.

"Maybe tomorrow will be better for us then," Pinepaw said. He finished up his fish and excused himself. He padded into the apprentice's den. He curled up into his new nest. His tail flopped on top of his muzzle.

He closed his eyes and let the darkness take his body as he drifted off into sleep.

~~~~~~~

"Pinepaw, it is sunrise. Stormwhisker wants to take you out on the dawn patrol," Tawnypaw pawed at the sleeping apprentice.

He rolled over to try and sleep some more, but she continued to bug him. He eventually woke up. He stretched out his muscles before padding out with Tawnypaw next to him.

"I was beginning to think you were going to stay asleep."

"I am just not used to waking up early," he yawned.

"Finally, you're up. I was beginning to think I was going to be the one to wake you," Stormwhisker called.

Pinepaw mumbled a sorry. He turned to the tortoiseshell she-cat beside him. "Are you going too?" She nodded her head. He lit up
~~~~~~~

inside as they followed Stormwhisker to the camp entrance.

Riverstripe and Ottersplash sat there and waved their tails once the three got closer.

"You're back now," Ottersplash said. Pinepaw folded his ears down in embarrassment. "You'll get used to it, Pinepaw. It is hard for every apprentice at the beginning."

They took off into the territory. It was still a little unfamiliar since he only got to go around it on his first day as an apprentice. A few things looked familiar, but he would easily get lost if he ever ran off away from the patrol.

"This is your first patrol?" Tawnypaw asked, trotted up to Pinepaw's side. The brown tom nodded his head. "Patrols are easy to do. We just have to make sure that none of the other clans or rouges don't trespass into our territory. There really is only one clan that we'll have trouble with. Most of our territory is surrounded by water. We'll leave scent markers along it to show the edge."

Stormwhisker leads everyone to the first border. "Pinepaw, do you remember this scent?"

Pinepaw opened his mouth to let the scents bathe on his tongue. After a bit, he then said, "Marshclan." Stormwhisker nodded his head in approval. They came to the edge and the light brown tom showed Pinepaw how marking the border was like.

They walked down the border and marked along the way. Pinepaw started to pinpoint some more of the borderlines so he won't pass any of them.

At sunhigh, they made their way back. The patrol padded into camp and Stormwhisker went to report. Pinepaw was told to give prey to the elders. He got a trout and a minnow and dragged them over to the elder's den.

Sunstep was in there finishing pulling the ticks off Minnowslip's back. The she-cat sighed in relief. "That thing has been bugging me all morning."

"It's gone now," the tom smiled. He picked up the mouse bile and waved goodbye to the three elders in the den.

"Oh... Pinepaw. Have you brought us something to eat? My belly is growling," Rockpelt meowed.

Minnowslip and Rockpelt were the parents of Pinepaw's father, Rowanfrost. They were thrillers to see that their kit would be having kits with his mate. They helped pick out a name for him.

"I've brought a trout and a minnow for you all to share," he told them.

"Come on in," Spiritleaf said. The elders took the fish. He sat down in front of them.

"How's being an apprentice finally? You and your littermates were always eager to become apprentices. You three would always cause trouble," Minnowslip said.

"It's great so far. Stormwhisker has taught me a lot. He said we can start to actually swim later."

"Rowanfrost would tell us how you all would jump in the water and the other warriors would have to save you all from getting too far out there."

Pinepaw started to lick his chest in embarrassment. "We were just playing."

"I miss swimming in the water. I don't do it as often because of my age. Occasionally, I'll go loosen up my stiff bones," Spiritleaf said. "I suggest getting as much swimming as you can while you can. You'll really start to miss the water when you're cooped up in a den all day."

"You better get going. I'm sure you haven't had anything to eat yourself. Go get your strength up," Rockpelt said.

Pinepaw dipped his head to the elders and padded out of the den. He got a small fish of his own and started to eat. When he was almost done, Stormwhisker came up to him.

"Sandypaw and Cloverpaw with their mentors will be joining us. I'm sure you want to do something with your littermates."

Pinepaw hurried up and finished. They were meeting the others there. They were the second ones there. Cloverpaw and Birchclaw were already there.

"Pinepaw, are you ready to learn how to swim!" the white and brown dappled she-cat bounced over to him.

"Yeah! I'm going to be the best swimmer in Morningclan," Pinepaw boasted.

"I think I'll be better than all of you," Sandypaw said coming over with Ravenfall at her side.

"Don't make this into a contest. You each need to focus on your own skills and not try to outdo your littermates," Birchclaw meowed.

The three sat in a line in front of the mentors. They first demonstrated what to do first before they actually got in the water. Cloverpaw went first with Birchclaw there beside her to help her when she needed it. Sandypaw was next. Ravenfall sat off a little farther to allow her to learn by herself.

"You're up next, Pinepaw," Stormwhisker told him. Pinepaw was a bit nervous to get into the water. What if I don't ever learn how to swim. I'll be the first Morningclan cat that can't.

Pinepaw stepped in the water. He walked out until he could barely touch. He started to move his legs to keep his head above the water. After a little bit, he gained confidence and started to drift out a little farther as he swam around the side of the river.

"You got it Pinepaw!" His littermates joined him in the water and they all started to swim around.

"This is so much fun!" Pinepaw called out. He went over to the bank and pulled himself out of the water.

"You all-natural swimmers," Birchclaw said. Sandypaw and Cloverpaw joined in next to him.

"Next, it should be time to learn how to fish," Stormwhisker said. "Knowing how to swim plays a big role in fishing. You will also know how to watch the way the water moves and signs of the water. We'll have to take you to the shallow end to have your first fishing lesson."

Pinepaw couldn't wait to learn everything there is about the water. He was eager to learn everything to become the best warrior in Morningclan.

Chapter 12

[image]

Tinyslip stretched her legs out from laying out in the sun. After going on a couple of patrols, she decided that she wanted to take a small nap out in the sun.

She padded back into camp. Most of the patrols were already back and ready to share tongues with their clanmates. The freshkill pile was all stocked and ready to go.

As she began walking over to Frogsplash, a little brown fur ball flashed under her feet. Brackenkit popped out from under her.

"Brackenkit, watch where you are going. Don't get in the warriors' way," Fernstep yelled at the light brown tom kit.

"He's fine. He is just playing," Tinyslip reassured the she-cat.

"Can you play with me?" Brackenkit asked her.

"I've got to eat, but maybe later I can."

His tail drooped down and dragged it behind him but to the nursery where Fernstep was waiting for him. Tinyslip joined her father as they sat down to start enjoying the prey they were sharing together.

"It seems like Brackenkit has taken an interest in you. You might become a mentor here before too long," Frogsplash says.

"I'm still too young to have an apprentice," she said as she tore away a piece of meat.

"He is only three moons old. You'll still have to wait for another three moons before he is ready."

"That will be Flamestar's decision, if I'm ready or not to have an apprentice."

"I think you're responsible enough. I remember my first apprentice. Her name was Russetmoon. She died at an early age from a badger attack. I was there and I couldn't save her. She was bleeding so badly. I wish I could have helped her more."

"I'm sure she is watching you from Starclan. It was her time then. There is no need to feel at fault."

"I know."

The two finished up eating. Frogsplash was assigned to a border patrol. Tinyslip was going to go out and hunt by herself, but a little brown kit stopped her again.

"Can you play with me now? You're done eating with Frogsplash," he asked as he jumped around her.

"I guess I could play for a little bit," she told him. He takes her over to a small area next to the nursery. He had a little mossball place over here. He grabs one and tosses it over to her.

"Keep it away from me," he meows.

She crouches down as the kit charged after her. She leaps over him and runs over to the other side. She sways the mossball in her mouth to tease him.

"You'll never take any of our prey, Morningclan fish heads!" He jumps over and she turns around to run. He lands on her back as she pretends to fall down due to his weight. He crawls over her head and he takes the mossball from her jaws.

"We lost the prey," she cried out.

"That is what you get Morningclan warrior. You don't take prey from Marshclan."

"My clan is so low on prey. Please we need it."

"My clan needs it more. I need to feed my clan."

"I see you're getting along with Brackenkit," Flamestar comes over

to the two playing.

"He seemed lonely, so I thought he could use someone to play with," Tinyslip said, getting up off the ground.

"He won't be for long. Spottedheart just came to Gorseshine saying she has been expecting kits. She is moving into the nursery today with Fernstep," he told her.

"That is nice. The clan needs new kits. We haven't had any in a few moons now."

"With new kits means new apprentices. How would you like it if I gave you your first apprentice?"

"I would be honored, but you don't think I'm still a bit young."

"You'll be ready given a couple of moons. I see your potential. I'm also sure that Brackenkit would love for you to become his mentor. I've been wanting a good warrior who can mentor my son and seeing how you decided to play with him when no one would, I think you'll be the best out of any warrior here."

"I would love to train Brackenkit. I'll make sure he becomes a great warrior like his father."

"I don't doubt it." Flamestar waved goodbye and Fernstep called Brackenkit in. Tinyslip went off to go do her hunting that she originally planned on doing.

Her thoughts were crowded with what Flamestar said. She was very excited to be getting her first apprentice in a few moons but she was also very nervous to live up to what Flamestar wanted her to be. He had so much confidence when telling her that Brackenkit was promised to be her apprentice. She had to take this time to prepare herself to live up to those expectations.

She came up to a frog. She crouched down and slowly moved through the trees. She focuses on the creature before leaping in the air and landing a little behind it. The frog slipped out of her paws and jumped in a nearby pond. *This apprentice is really clogging up my mind. I need to forget about this so I can feed my clan.*

Tinyslip shook her head and went off to look for any other prey that would be around here.

~~~~~~~

Tinyslip sat next to Creampaw and Maplepaw. They wanted to spend time with the warrior since Robinpaw was too busy and Tinyslip was the only other one who was the closest to their age.

"I can't wait to be a warrior. I'm tired of removing ticks from the elders," Maplepaw complained.

"Then stop getting on Forestshadow's nerves. You're too hyper and you never listen," Creampaw told his sister. "I have to be good or Burnpelt would have my tail before I could say 'mouse'."

"It is better if you listen to your mentor than not. You'll be doing a lot more things that you don't want to do if you choose to disrespect them," Tinyslip meowed.

"Did you get into a lot of trouble when you were an apprentice?"

"She was a very good apprentice and always listened to everything I said," Dawnberry appeared behind the group. "I was lucky and she turned into a fine warrior. You two should pick up some things from her."

"It is nice to talk again, Dawnberry," Tinyslip said.

"I wanted to congratulate you. Flamestar told me you would be getting your first apprentice."

"Yeah, he said I would be the best warrior to train Brackenkit."

"You're going to become a mentor!?" Maplepaw cheered. Tinyslip nodded at her question.

"She has earned it too. I know she'll become an excellent mentor," Dawnberry praised.

"I was wanting to talk to you about that. Can you give me a few tips for when it happens? I want to be the best mentor to him."
~~~~~~~

"You don't need anything. You're going to be a great mentor no matter what I tell you." Tinyslip nodded at her compliment, but inside she didn't feel as confident. "You'll be great."

Why does everyone think that I'll be a great mentor? I don't have any confidence that I'll do good. Brackenkit might become a terrible warrior because of me. I don't want Flamestar to hate me. He should pick another cat that has more experience than me, who is a newly made warrior who has no experience in training an apprentice. I can start learning how to, but the leader's kit is too much pressure.

She excused herself as Frogsplash padded back into camp. He quickly went over to his kit when he saw her rushing over to him.

"Are you okay? Is something wrong?" He asked her.

"Flamestar wants me to be Brackenkit's mentor," she spits out.

"See I told you he would. I know you'll be amazing."

"That's the problem. I don't think I'll be good with this much pressure on me to train him to be a good warrior. He is the leader's kit and if I mess up, then the whole clan will look down at me."

"I promise, you'll be fine. I was like this too when I was given Russetmoon as my first apprentice. Every warrior goes through this when they get their first apprentice. You'll be an amazing mentor to Brackenkit."

"I'll take your word on that and I'll try to calm myself down. I should be feeling excited to be having an apprentice, he'll be my first one. He should be a special one."

"That's the spirit!"

Tinyslip let out her breath she was holding in. She still felt a little nervous, but it was reduced to her father's kind words. She wanted to be the best mentor for Brackenkit and these few moons would allow her to come up with a good plan.

I also have something new to announce. I've made a compete allegiance of all the cats in the clans. It will be back in the

allegiance page if you want to check it out.

Chapter 13

[image]

The day was clear. No clouds were in the sky above. Heatherheart stood in front of all the cats as she was just getting ready to send out the evening patrols.

Honeysong flicked her tail at the tom sitting next to her. Dustywing's eyes kept traveling over to look at her. She sent him a quick glare before paying attention back over to Heatherheart.

"Barkpelt will lead a border patrol with Grayspot, Dustywing, Frostpaw, and Timberfang. You'll patrol along the Meadowclan border," the deputy called out. The four cats gathered in front of the camp's entrance before taking off out to the territory. "Juniperslash will lead a hunting patrol with Snowcloud, Poppymist, Honeysong, and Pebblewing."

Honeysong stood up from her spot and found the rest of them waiting for her. Juniperslash waved his tail for them to follow. He led them out of the camp and took them through the trees until they found a good spot to hunt.

Juniperslash padded up next to her as the rest were slipping off to hunt. "I wanted to tell you that Barkpelt really cares for you. He was heartbroken when Sunmist died. You look so much like Sunmist that he would only see her whenever he looked at you."

"I really don't want to talk Barkpelt right now. Let's just focus on hunting," Honeysong meowed and walked away from the black tom.

She scented the air to find any prey around her. She picked up the scent of a squirrel. She looked over and saw it nibbling onto a seed. She crouched down and slowly padded forward. She waited to see if it detected her before she sprang up in the air, She landed right on its back. She finishes it off as it goes limp in her jaws.

She was buried under a bush to mask its scent. She padded away to

see if she could find anything else. She scented a sparrow. She crouched down and crept forward.

As she was about to spring the sparrow flew away. A flash of white fur appeared in front of her. Frostpaw stood there as his chest moved fast as if he was running.

"We need your help. A... a fox is attacking the patrol over by... Meadowclan territory," he spoke, out of breath.

Honeysong turned and called for the rest of her patrol. They all appeared from the bushes around her. "The border patrol is being attacked."

"Frostpaw, go back and tell Curlstar," Juniperslash told the apprentice. He nodded and took off towards camp. "Let's go!"

The patrol ran through the forest to save their clanmates. They were soon able to hear their yowls. They broke through and saw the fox hovering over the three cats. Its jaws snapped at the cats.

Honeysong jumped onto the fox's muzzle and clawed at its eyes. The fox cried out and shook its head. Honeysong flew off and landed on the ground. She pulled herself back onto her paws.

The rest of the patrol was already fighting the fox. Grayspot was sitting off to the side. A deep gash was visible in her leg.

"Are you okay?" a cat asked her. She looked over and saw Dustywing. She nodded and the two flew back into battling the fox. Honeysong clawed at its legs. She leaped out of the way when the fox turned its head over to snap at her.

She jumped on its back. She dug her claws into the fox's pelt to hold herself on. She crawled over to the fox's head. She then clawed at the fox's eyes once again. The fox whelped and shook its head to throw Honeysong off of it.

Honeysong tried to hold on but lost her grip. She fell to the ground right in front of the fox. She looked up as the fox towered over her. She froze in fear as the fox leaned down and took her in its jaws. She felt its fangs crush into her skin. She was shook around before

being thrown into a nearby tree.

"Honeysong!" she could hear someone call out. She assumed it was Dustywing.

The fox turned over to her again, but she couldn't save herself this time. The fox's jaw opened ready to consume her. She closed her eyes ready for her fate to happen.

A loud crunch filled Honeysong's ears. It wasn't from her body though. She opened her eyes and saw Barkpelt's limp body hanging from the jaws of the fox.

Blood dripped down and covered the ground in front of her. She watched as the fox tore Barkpelt's body. Her clanmates attacked the fox once again. The fox dropped Barkpelt's body. He laid right in front of her.

His pelt was torn and his eyes were only half opened as his dead body stared right at her. *He risked his life to save me*, she thought.

More cats emerged from the bushes. Frostpaw had brought more of their clanmates to help. With more paws, they were able to drive the fox away.

Dustywing came running over to her. "Honeysong, are you okay? Can you walk? Let's get you back to camp," He turned around as Timberfang helped her move onto his back.

"Can you get Barkpelt?" she asked the cream tom. He just nodded and padded away to Barkpelt's limp body.

Dustywing carried her back to camp. She was immediately brought to the medicine cat's den. She was laid in a nest of moss. Mouseshine examined her and applied herbs to her cuts.

"It looks like you didn't break anything. You only just sprained your hind leg. You'll have to stay here and do some exercises in order for you to regain strength back in your leg. It will only take a little over a moon."

Honeysong only just nodded her head. She was watching outside

the den as her clanmates laid Barkpelt's body out in the clearing.

He must have really cared for me. I pushed him way all the time. He must have felt even more pain because of me. I should have grown closer to him. Now he is dead because of me. I have nobody.

Dustywing carried in a mouse from his jaws. He dropped it in front of her.

"You need to keep your strength up if you want to recover faster," the black tom told her. She pushed it away and buried her muzzle under her paws.

"I'm not in the mood. I need time alone," she meowed. Dustywing looked at her sadly and dipped his head and padded out of the den. He glanced back at her one more time before leaving her alone.

Honeysong laid her head down on her paws. She stared out at the distance of the camp. Mouseshine had just finished going around and treating all of the injured cats. She was now standing over Barkpelt's body.

She fixed his body and applied rosemarie onto his fur to mask the scent of death. She positioned his body to make it look like the tom was sleeping.

Honeysong's heart was heavy. She watched each cat padding up to the senior warrior and touching their noses in his pelt to wish him a safe trip to Starclan.

"Do you want to say your last words to Barkpelt?" Mouseshine padded over to the cream tabby. She didn't even care to look up at the medicine cat.

"I don't deserve to say goodbye. I treated him terrible for moons when all he did was care for me," she meowed.

"I'm sure he would appreciate it if you would say goodbye. His last wish was to save you and now you should repay him by thanking him." She sat down and placed her tail around the young warrior's back.

"He doesn't want to see me"

"Suit yourself. But I promise he would like it if you would thank him one last time." The gray tabby she-cat turned her back and made her way back out to sit next to Barkpelt's body.

Honeysong couldn't take it anymore and moved her head to look away from the clearing. She hissed when her hind leg moved, but it allowed her to not feel as depressed as she did while watching her dead father. But not all the pain was gone. The scene kept flashing back through her mind. She closed her eyes and covered her ears. She couldn't take it.

Maybe I just need some sleep. Then I'll just forget about it for a little while. She tried to block out all the sounds around her as she forced herself to get some sleep

Chapter 14

[image]

Pinepaw day has been long with training. He was exhausted. He dragged himself into camp. Cloverpaw was just entering the apprentices' den. He trotted over after her.

"You're back, Pinepaw," she meowed as she settled herself down into her moss bed.

"Stormwhisker had me training all day. I hardly had time to rest," he told her.

"I feel you. Birchclaw was especially hard today. He would yell at me for slacking off for a little bit. I was just taking a breather."

"I just want to rest tonight. I hope it will be easier tomorrow."

As the two nestled into their nests. Tanwypaw and Snowpaw padded in with Sandypaw following close behind them. Everyone looked tired from training. All the mentors were being hard on them recently.

Pinepaw flicked his tail over his nose and closed his eyes. He hoped that his sleep would be peaceful.

~~~~~~~

Last night was all in Pinepaw's favor. He slept so beautifully that he didn't want to wake up. Snowpaw had to drag him out of the den.

Pinepaw followed Stormwhisker through the forest. He let out a huge yawn as they stopped in the clearing.

"Wake up, Pinepaw!" Stormwhisker scowled at him He quickly straightened up.
~~~~~~~

"Why are you suddenly so harsh? You weren't like this before," Pinepaw hesitantly asked.

"You might not remember because last time you were a small kit, but Morningclan has an apprentice contest whenever there are new apprentices. I'm working you hard so you can win," he responded.

"We have a contest between apprentices?" Stormwishker only nodded his head. "Since when did we have apprentices' contests?"

"They happen whenever new apprentices have trained for a few moons. All the mentors organize a day when we have them. Some of the warriors will come and overview them as well."

They then started on battle practice for the day. Stormwhisker taught him a couple new moves for him to practice.

"Tawnypaw and Foxpaw will come soon. I'll have you practice your new moves on them."

"Why not any of my littermates? Could I fight the experienced apprentices?"

"You'll have too in the contest so you might as well learn their fighting style now before the day happens."

They practiced a little while before the two apprentices with their mentors, Rowanfrost and Ottersplash, following after them.

"I finally get to see how my kit has been doing in training," Rowanfrost perked up at the sight of his son.

I forgot that Rowanfrost is Foxpaw's mentor. I'm totally going to embarrass myself in front of him today and on the day of the contest, Pinepaw thought.

Pinepaw was instructed to watch Tawnypaw and Snowpaw battle each other first to show what it might look like.

Even with his father being here, he was excited to work with Tawnypaw for the first time. I was curious to see how well the she-cat was in fighting.

Foxpaw was the first to strike as she leaped out towards the tortoiseshell she-cat. Tawnypaw was too fast and moved out of the way and maneuvered her way around and pinned the reddish she-cat to the ground. Foxpaw let out a hiss in frustration and batted at Tawnypaw's face.

She lost control as Foxpaw leaped out from under her. She lashed out at Tawnypaw's feet which caused her to roll over. Foxpaw then went over to jump onto her, but this time Tawnypaw was prepared for her attack.

Just before Foxpaw landed on her, Tawnypaw kicked out her hind legs which sent Foxpaw flying over to the other side of the clearing. She let out a cry before landing in the soft grass.

"That was cool!" he shouted out. His tail flicked in happiness.

The battle was over, but that meant it was his turn. He cautiously moved in the center.

"Remember that Pinepaw isn't as trained as you are so going a bit easy on him," Rowanfrost told the reddish apprentice. She only flicked her ear in response.

He crouched down waiting for her to attack first, none of them moved. He glanced over at his mentor, but he stood there motionless.

Foxpaw used that to her advanged and sprang at him. He was too late to dodge the attack so he hit the ground. He tried to kick her away, but she was too strong. He made himself limp in her grasp. When he felt her losing her grip, he knocked her in the jaw. She stumbled over to the side, but her focus went straight back over to him.

"I wouldn't be beaten by a kit that easily," she hissed. Her tail lashed out and she charged at him. He was too slow to avoid her.

She came up on her hind legs and bashed him in the head with her paws. He fell to the side as his head slammed into the ground. He pulled himself up slowly. His vision was all blurry.

"Foxpaw! I told you to go easy!" Rowanfrost ran over to scold the she-cat.

Stormwhisker came running over to his side. "Are you okay, Pinepaw?"

He was getting ready to answer, but he saw a flash of white fur fly past the bushes behind everyone. He squinted his eyes to see who it was.

He tried to take a step forward, but his eyesight was worse than before and soon he could only see blackness all around him as he felt his body crash into the ground below.

~~~~~~~

Pinepaw woke up. He blinked his eyes open and looked around. He was still in the forest. Nobody was around him. He lifted himself up on his paws.

I'm sure everyone wouldn't have left me in the clearing, he thought to himself.

"Dustpaw! Are you sleeping in the clearing again," A light gray she-cat came bounding her way into the clearing. He cocked his head sideways at the unfamiliar cat and name. "You better watch out. Dewsnow is looking for you. You know how she gets when you're slacking off."

"Who's Dewsnow?" he asked her.

"What's wrong with you? Dewsnow is your mentor. She's just left camp to find you."

This must be a dream. I don't know any of these cats. He shook his fur clean of all the dirt and dust.

"If you don't mind me asking, what is your name?"

"You must still be dreaming. I'm Rainpaw you're littermate. Come on let's go down to the lake to make it look like you were fishing this entire time."
~~~~~~~

She turned her back and headed back down through the trees. He followed her. She led him down to the tip of where the lake was.

"I bet I can catch the most fish before Dewsnow comes here," she challenged. He simply nodded his head.

He walked over and sat next to the edge of the water. He made sure his shadow wasn't shining over and watched to see if any fish would swim by.

A little minnow swam by as he scooped his paw down in the water and scooped up the little fish. He threw it down onto the ground and quickly killed it.

"You're still so much better at fishing than I am, but I can easily beat you in a battle. You can't even get back onto your paws. One day I'll be better than you. Mackerelstar will make me a warrior before you."

"Don't we get made warriors at the same time though?" he asked her.

She looked at him confused. "You might want to go see the medicine cat. You still think you're in your dream. We half to prove that we can become warriors first before Mackerelstar would consider making us warriors. We have to excel in hunting, fighting, swimming, and tracking before we can become warriors."

A rustle in the bushes made the two apprentices turn their head over. A white she-cat with gray spots appeared. Her tail lashed in anger.

"There you are, Dustpaw! Do you know how long I have been looking for you! You're lucky I don't claw your ears off!" She hissed at him.

"He's been fishing this entire time. I found him not too long ago," the light gray she-cat stood up for him.

"Where is all the fish then?"

"He said that there wasn't much fish and had to move over here."

"You better not be lying to protect your littermate. Let's go back to camp now!" She turned her tail and the two followed her back to camp through the trees.

They arrived at camp and Rainpaw and Dustpaw set their prey down in the freshkill pile. They were sent back to the den and were told not the leave.

"Did you get in trouble again, Dustpaw?" A black tom sat off to the side with a cocky smile on as he was chowing down on a fish.

"I found him sleeping in the clearing again," Rainpaw said for him. "Dewsnow would have definitely clawed his ears off if she found him first. Luckily I got to him and we went down to the lake to play it off as he was fishing."

"Colepaw, would you mind leaving for a second so I can talk to these two?" A golden tom appeared at the entrance of the den. He was very muscular and had to push himself though the tiny apprentices' den.

Colepaw dipped his head and grabbed his remaining bites of his fish and padded out of the den.

"Dewsnow told me you disappeared from camp. This can't continue to happen Dustpaw," he scolded him. "Rainpaw you also can't stand up for your littermate all the time. He needs to take responsibility at some time."

"I swear, Berryfang. I did find him fishing."

"You know you are lying to your deputy right now."

"I'm telling the truth."

He nodded his head and scoffed at the two and pushed himself out of the den.

"That was a close one. You own me one. Maybe you can teach me how to fish well."

"Maybe we shouldn't lie to the deputy," he said to her.

She shook her head. "I told you when we were kits, that I will always protect you. Ever since Heatherkit died we were alway close. I want to make sure you are not in trouble."

Heatherkit must have been our littermate. "Yeah, she shouldn't have died like that," he tried to go along with what she was saying.

"Some nights it still haunts me. Don't know how you can sleep well every night and still go off and sleep in secret. I wish I could do that too."

"I'm sure you'll get over it one day. Just know she is in Starclan and is watching over us." Rainpaw only nodded and laid down in her nest. She planted her head down on her paws and stared out at the wall. Her tail moved every so often.

Pinepaw laid down next to her, assuming that is where his nest is. She didn't say anything and he curled up next to her. He closed his eyes in hoping that he would be back in his nest with Cloverpaw and Sandypaw next to him.

Chapter 15

[image]

Ryepaw ran inside of the medicine cat's den. He sat inside as the water drops fell from the top of the entrance of the den. He set the herbs that were in his mouth down on the ground. He checked to see if they were dry. Luckily they weren't too wet.

He looked out as the two newly made apprentices and their mentors came running into camp. Earlier that day, Cheetahstar gave Morningpaw and Ravenpaw their apprentice names. He chose Drizzlefrost to mentor Morningpaw and Windbreeze to mentor Ravenpaw.

"Did any of the herbs get too wet?" Blackstep meowed sounded from the back of the den. Ryepaw turned and shook his head no. He gathered them up and carried them to the back.

He started to sort through them when a yowl came bursting through camp. Blackstep left the den as Ryepaw quickly finished sorting through the last pieces before going after him.

Wolfshine laid in the middle of camp. Her leg was bent at a wrong angle.

"What happened?" Ryepaw came running over, worried about his friend that laid on the ground.

"She slipped in the mud and she fell on her leg in a weird way," Brightfeather said.

"Hold her leg there," Blackstep ordered him. He placed his paws down on her leg. Blackstep gave a great push and Wolfshine yowled out in pain.

"She will be fine. Let's get her to the den. She can rest and get out

of this rain."

Brightfeather and Harerunner, who was also out on the patrol, carried the young warrior over to the medicine cat's den. Ryepaw laid out a nice fresh bedding of moss for her to lay on.

"Thanks, Ryepaw," Wolfshine said as she got situated into her nest.

"It wasn't me that fixed you. You should be thanking Blackstep for that," he replied.

"I mean for laying out my bedding."

"Oh... No problem." Ryepaw smiled at her.

Ryepaw went to the herb storage and pawed out a few poppy seeds. He brought them back over and gave them to Wolfshine.

"You should be better by tomorrow if you get enough rest today. These will ease some pain and help you sleep."

"I wonder when the rain will stop. It has been on and off raining these past few days. I wonder if the storm is coming?" she said as she lapped up the poppy seeds on the ground.

"Who knows. I hope we still have time. I want it to stop before we leave to visit sacred hollow tonight. I don't feel like having my fur all wet when I get back to my nest."

"You get to go out. I'm stuck here all night without you being here. I thought this would be the first time in forever since we've slept next to one another."

"I'll be sure to make it back quick. I might be able to sleep for a little bit with you."

Wolfshine's ears perked up and her tail moved back and forth happily. She then let out a big yawn and tuck her muzzle underneath her paws. She closed her eyes.

Ryepaw stared at her silver pelt and how it started to glow as

the sun was setting.

"Ryepaw, start getting ready. We need to leave soon," Blackstep's voice rang in the den. Ryepaw nodded his head and stood up from his place. "I think you are ready to become a full medicine cat tonight. You've been working extra hard lately and I can see that it is your time."

All of his furs sparked out in excitement. "Really!" Blackstep gave a swift nod. Ryepaw now bounced up and got himself ready for the journey that he was ready for.

~~~~~~~

Ryepaw followed Blackstep into the cave. Mouseshine, Sunstep, Gorseshine, and Robinpaw sat there with one another as their heads were together while they spoke with one another.

"There you two are," Mouseshine smiled at them. "I was just telling the others that I might get an apprentice in a few moons. One of the kits in our clan has been interested in helping me recently."

"I can't wait to meet them," Blackstep gave a quick nod. "Meanwhile, I also have good news. I've decided that Ryepaw is ready to become a full medicine cat." He held his head up high while they started to congratulate him.

"You beat me to it. Just you wait next time it will be my turn," Robinpaw meowed. Robinpaw was just as old as he was. They were both born in the same moon.

They all headed back to the location of the Star Pond. Everyone gathered around it as Blackstep stood in front of Ryepaw, ready to give him his full medicine cat name.

"I, Blackstep, medicine cat of Meadowclan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. He has trained hard to understand the ways of a medicine cat, and with your help he will serve his Clan for many moons."
~~~~~~~

"Ryepaw, do you promise to uphold the ways of a medicine cat, to stand apart from rivalry between Clan and Clan and to protect all cats equally, even at the cost of your life?"

Ryepaw proudly lifted his head and replied, "I do."

"Then by the powers of StarClan I give you your true name as a medicine cat. Ryepaw, from this moment you will be known as Ryefeather. StarClan honors your quick learning, and we welcome you as a full medicine cat of Meadowclan."

Blackstep moves forward and places his muzzle down on his shoulder. Ryefeather licks it in return as all the other medicine cats cheer his new name.

"Ryefeather! Ryefeather! Ryefeather!"

They then gather around and rest next to the Star Pond. Ryefeather closed his eyes as his spirit was lifted from his body.

His eyes opened and he wasn't lying next to Star Pond. He looked around and all the other medicine cats were joined with him.

"Why are we all here together?" Mouseshine asked.

"Normally we're seperate," Sunstep meowed.

"It must be important if they've gathered everyone here. Let's wait and see what they have for us," Blackstep told everyone.

It wasn't too long before the Starclan cats appeared from the bushes. Their pelts shone like the stars in the night sky.

"You all must be wondering why you're all here," A pitch-black she-cat meowed. Her name was Nightpath. A former member of Marshclan.

"We've come to tell you that the storm has arrived. You must start preparing for the worst. You need the cat of nectar and the cat of the trees. They are your last hope," Dapplesnow, of Morningclan, said.

"Who are these cats? Tell us so we can find them," Gorseshine asked.

"Clan members flee at the sight of danger. Their paws take them into the unknown."

Another prophecy. It is what we need at a time like this. If only Starclan would tell us who these cats were.

Everything started to disappear as it became pitch black. A huge gust of wind brushed past Ryefeather's pelt. I blew so hard that it could carry a cat away in the air.

Ryefeather blinked his eyes open. All the other medicine cats slowly rose to their paws.

"We must find those cats. They are needed for the clan's survival," Mouseshine said. Everyone nodded in agreement.

"I hope they'll come to one of us about the dreams they've had. We need them now," Robinpaw said.

They all said their goodbyes and quickly rushed back to their own clans.

The wind blew and light rain fell from the sky as Ryefeather and Blackstep made their way back to camp. They pushed through it to reach the camp faster.

Ryefeather emerges from the entrance. He saw a bunch of leaves scattered around the clearing. He took no notice of it and quickly ran to reach the shelter of his den.

Wolfshine sat there with her head up. She smiled when he entered the den.

"You're back, Ryepaw!" she mewed excitedly.

"I'm not Ryepaw anymore," he exclaimed.

"Don't tell me Blackstep decided to give you your full medicine cat name and you didn't even tell me."

"He told me when you fell asleep. I go by Ryefeather now." He puffed out his chest fur.

"I love it!" She meowed. He padded over and sat next to her. She nuzzled into his fur.

Ryefeather's body heated up. It always felt great whenever Wolfshine and him were huddled so close to one another. Wolfshine's bright face made it even better. Her deep brown eyes made him get lost whenever he stared into them. It was hard to look away from the gorgeous she-cat. He could look at her all day.

He shook his head away from his thoughts. *I'm a medicine cat now. I can't be thinking about all this. I'm not allowed to have a mate.* Ryefeather's heart dropped after thinking this. Why did it feel so painful?

Chapter 16

[image]

The camp was quiet today. Nothing much was happening. Tinyslip padded back into camp with a crow and a squirrel in her jaws. She padded over and dropped them down on the freshkill pile.

"Tinyslip!" A loud voice rang over the camp's clearing. A small brown kit sprinted over to her.

"Hello Brackenkit," she purred once he reached her.

"Can you show me the hunter's crouch again? I want to get it down when I become an apprentice in a few days."

"Sure. Let's get out of the middle of the camp. I don't want any of the warriors to trip over you. I'm sure you don't want them to pull your fur out."

They padded over next to the nursery. Tinyslip crouched down into her hunting crouch as a demonstration to Brackenkit. He tried to copy her, but had many mistakes to fix. Tinyslip went over and corrected the soon to be apprentice.

"You're going to be the best mentor ever! I can't wait to become an apprentice!"

That word is being thrown at me again, she thought. The other day, Brackenkit yelled that out. She didn't feel like she could be the best mentor. There would be so many other cats in the clan that would be a better mentor to Brackenkit but Flamestar picked her.

She tried to be confident on the outside, but inside, she wasn't. She knew that something would happen to Brackenkit one day and everyone would throw all the blame on her because he is her apprentice. Brackenkit was Flamestar's kit. His only kit. He would totally exile her if something happened and Brackenkit was killed.

"I think I got it!" Brackenkit's yell freed her from her thoughts.

"I would say it is pretty good. Just remember to not swish your tail. If you accidentally move a leaf then your prey will be taking off into the bushes."

"There is my favorite son," A low voice appeared behind her. Flamestar padded over to the kit as Brackenkit ran over to his father.

"Tinyslip is teaching me the hunter's crouch so I can be ready to hunt once I'm an apprentice."

Now I'm going to get scolded for training him before he is an apprentice.

"It sounds like you're doing well. Every kit is eager to learn before their apprenticeship. I'm glad you're getting ready early. I want you to be the best apprentice ever."

"I will!"

Tinyslip was surprised by Flamestar's actions. She expected to be scolded, but she was being praised.

The sun was beginning to set and Fernstep called Brackenkit in to sleep. Tinyslip dipped her head to Flamestar before padding off to the warrior's den. Frogsplash sat there grooming his fur.

"There you are. I saw you hanging out with Brackenkit and Flamestar. He must have taken a liking to you," Frogsplash looked up at her when she joined next to him.

"He just wanted to see Brackenkit," She responded.

"With him becoming your apprentice soon, you won't have time to spend with me anymore. I'm going to miss hunting with you."

"I'll still have time for you. We three can go together once he learns how to hunt. I wouldn't abandon you."

"If only you were hanging out with an older tom. I want to see

your kits before I go."

"We've been over this many times now. I'm not looking for a mate right now. My duties are focused on the clan, not with toms and kits." Tinyslip laid down in her bed. She covered her muzzle with her tail. Frogsplash didn't say anything more and laid next to her. She closed her eyes and drifted off into darkness.

~~~~~~~

A yowl filled the camp early in the morning. Tinyslip rose to her feet. Not very many warriors were left inside the den. She stretched out her legs and padded outside. Many cats gathered around the nursery with their heads close together as they spoke quietly to one another.

"What is going on?" Tinyslip asked as she padded up to her father. She sat down next to him. He showed her a worrisome expression.

"Spottedheart is having some complications with giving birth. Gorseshine says she might not make it through. She'll do her best to save the kits."

"Let's hope so. Marshclan has been having a hard time having kits lately. Brackenkit has grown up his whole life without any other kits to play with."

The day was long with everyone's minds worried on the calico queen. Flamestar tried to have everything run as normal. He told Shadowear to send out plenty of border and hunting patrols to distract the clan from thinking about the queen.

"It is over," Gorseshine's meow rang through the camp. "Sadly, Spottedheart passed away. She gave birth to two kits. Yellowflight has decided to name them Silentkit and Bumblekit. Fernstep has decided to care for them until another queen comes to the den."

"I can do it. I'm not heavily pregnant yet and wanted to continue my warrior duties, but these kits need me," Newtleaf pushed her way through the crowd.
~~~~~~~

"Whose kits are these?" Gorseshine asked. "I've noticed your pregnancy, but never knew the tom was?"

"Darkwhisper and I have decided to become mates. We both were looking for one until we found each other."

"Very well, Newtleaf will care for Silentkit and Bumblekit," Gorseshine announced. "I also have one more thing to say. Robinpaw is very much ready to become a full medicine cat. At the next half moon, I will make Robinpaw a full medicine cat."

Tinyslip smiled at the announcement. She wasn't too close with Robinpaw, but liked the she-cat. She had to come around to her when Dawnberry had her. She totally had to see her old mentor's newborn she-kit.

"We are all sad for Spottedheart's death, but she gave us two young kits. We must be thankful for that. She risked her life to give us these kits. We must all say our wishes to her for her vigil tonight," Flamestar said. "We sadly also have another thing. Treestripe has discussed with me and has decided to retire from his warrior duties."

Treestripe was the eldest warrior in Marshclan right now. He was well respected by all Marshclan cats.

"Treestripe, is it your wish to give up the name of a warrior and go to join the elders?"

The brown tabby tom stepped forward and with a dip with his head, he replied, "It is."

"Your Clan honors you and all the service you have given to us. I call upon StarClan to give you many moons of rest."

The clan cheered for Treestripe as he went and joined Mudnose and Nettleleaf. The two gladly accepted the new elder with them.

"We must continue our lives now. Forestshadow you can lead a hunting patrol for tonight," Shadowear called. "Dawnberry, you'll lead one last border patrol to leave the last scent markers."

They dipped their heads and padded off to gather warriors to go along with them.

"Tinyslip, would you like to come with me?" Dawnberry asked her former apprentice.

"I would like too."

They gathered up Burnpelt with Creampaw too and took off into the swampy forest to mark the borders for tonight.

The camp was silent for the rest of the day. Everyone mourned the loss of Spottedheart. Yellowflight hasn't left the nursery and wanted to stay with the last piece that was given to him from his mate.

Spottedheart's other two kits, Maplepaw and Creampaw, have also been suffering. On the border patrol earlier, Creampaw was so spaced out that Burnpelt had to tap her muzzle for him to listen to him.

I know what it is like to lose a parent, but Nightpath died when I was just a kit. I was in the same spot as Silentkit and Bumblekit are in right now.

She padded over to the two apprentices. They had a sparrow in front of them that was left untouched.

"I know what it is like. I'm sorry for your loss," She told them when she approached them.

"We're happy that we have Silentkit and Bumblekit, but we've lost our mother. Yellowflight hasn't left the den to see us either," Maplepaw said.

"All of you are grieving. Give him time and I'm sure he'll be coming to see you two soon."

The sun was starting to set which started the vigil. Every cat of Marshclan came around and shared their final wishes with the calico she-cat before she would travel to Starclan.

Tinyslip padded up to the body of the dead she-cat. She pushed her muzzle into the fur and whispered, "*I will try to care for Maplepaw and Creampaw while Yellowflight is caring for Bumblekit and Silentkit. I'll make sure they turn into fine warriors."*

She stepped back to allow Yellowflight to come and see his mate for the last time. Tinyslip went back and joined in next to Frogsplash. His warm fur brushed against hers.

Marshclan is changing so much these days. We are getting fewer kits and all the senior warriors are starting to get old. We'll need as much help as we can. I'll be sure to train Brackenkit to help make that change happen and make Marshclan strong once again.

Chapter 17

[image]

The winds blew through the grass. Flower petals were scattered all around the ground from the wind pulling them off the stems. With all the rain made the ground muddy.

"I don't think the rain will stop anytime soon. We might just have to go hungry today," Blackstep murmurs from the corner of the den. He laid in his nest.

Blackstep joints have been starting to ache because of how old the medicine cat was. The tom was old enough to become an elder if he wanted too. He was too stubborn to do so. Ryefeather has tried too many times to talk to the tom.

"The warriors might just have to go out in the rain," Ryefeather meowed as he finished storing the last herb.

"I don't think Cheetahstar would allow that. We don't need all of our warriors getting whitecough."

Ryefeather peaked his head out of the den. The rain was still coming down hard. He peered across the camp. The warriors' dens sat right across from the medicine cats' den.

A pair of brown eyes shone from the den. Ryefeather's ears perked up as he stared across the clearing. Wolfshine stood there. Her tail moved back and forth, probably trying to tell him something. He watched her to pick up any signals, but couldn't understand what she was trying to say.

Ryefeather just dipped his head and flicked his tail to tell her goodbye.

He padded back into the den and flopped down into his nest. He closed his eyes. He was going to sleep the rain out. Hopefully, the rain would stop before he woke up.

~~~~~~~

Ryefeather lifted his head. Blackstep wasn't next to him anymore. He stood up onto his paws. He stretched out his limbs and peaked his head out of the den. The rain has stopped, only a little sprinkle came down.

He padded out. Plumbreeze just finished up sending out the last of the patrols before the rain would come back.

"Ryefeather!" He turned his head and saw Wolfshine running up to him. "Are you ready?"

He looked at her confused. "What do you mean?"

"I told you early that if the rain were to stop then we could go out together. It has been a while since we've hung out with one another. I thought today we could spend time with each other."

"I guess I could go out. I shouldn't be gone too long. Blackstep is getting worse day by day. I shouldn't leave him for so long."

"We'll just take a quick walk then. We won't be longer than what you want to be."

They padded out of camp. Their fur brushed against one another. The familiar scents of the open meadow drifted into Ryefeather's nose. It was always nice to be out on the meadow. Although it was all muddy. He could feel the bits of mud sticking into the pads of his feet. I was somewhat uncomfortable, but he could withstand it.

"I race you," Wolfshine challenged. She bounced up in front of him, ready to get rid of all her energy.

"We already know who is going to win. You're more used to being out here than I am," Ryefeather protested.

They lined up in the grass. At Wolfshine's call, they began to race across the open meadow. Ryefeather was starting off strong as he took the lead in front of Wolfshine.

Ryefeather continued to spirit through the heather, but Wolfshine
~~~~~~~

leaped up and passed the light brown tom. She took off way ahead of him. Ryefeather struggled to keep up now.

The race was over and Ryefeather fell to the ground. He was breathing rapidly.

"How did you manage to not get out of breath?" He asked as soon as he calmed his breathing down.

"It is one of the things we have to train for while apprentices. Meadowclan has the best stamina out of all the clans," she replied.

They stopped and stared at one another. Ryefeather took in Wolfshine's true beauty. He got lost in her beautiful brown eyes. He couldn't look away.

Wolfshine moved forward and pressed her head against his. A purr began to slip out of his throat. They nuzzled into one another's fur. They didn't want to break apart. Ryefeather wanted to always feel the warmth that radiated from Wolfshine's body.

Ryefeather pulled his head back. He could see the sad look on Wolfshine.

"We shouldn't be doing this," he told her.

"I know, but nobody has to know. It hurts knowing that we can't express our true feelings to one another. I want to show how much I do love you but I can't. I really do love you, Ryefeather."

"I love you too, Wolfshine. But this just goes against the medicine cat code that I pledged to follow."

"We will be the only one who knows about our relationship. Please, Ryefeather. I can't stop it anymore."

"Only if we keep it a secret." Wolfshine quickly nodded her head. They both began to nuzzle and groom one another's pelt. It felt good to finally be able to show each other their love.

Ryefeather felt his heartbeat. It felt as if it was beating out of his chest. He couldn't help himself whenever Wolfshine was near him.

He wanted to say next to her all the time.

The day went on and the clouds began to form in the sky once again. The two still sat off a little on the territory still spending time with each other.

"We should get back now," Ryefeather licked on top of Wolfshine's head. She lifted her head and nodded. They separated from each other and slowly made their way back to the camp. Ryefeather gathered a few herbs to show Blackstep that he was doing something productive.

They entered the camp. A few of the warriors were moving the freshkill over to keep it sheltered from the approaching rain.

They went there separate ways to try to prevent their clanmates from suspecting something.

He entered the den and dropped the herbs on the floor. He saw Blackstep heaving in the side of the den. He ran over to the old black tom.

"Are you okay?" he asked once Blackstep finished throwing up.

"I think it is just a stomach bug. Just a little rest should help me," he responded.

"I really think it is time for you to retire. You're too sick to continue all your duties. I'll be fine on my own."

"No, I want to continue. I don't see myself laying around doing nothing all day."

"That is kind of what your life is like now. You really need to at least consider it."

"Fine, I'll think about it. I'm not deciding anything right now." The black tom went over to the moss bed and curled up and fell back asleep.

"I don't think he'll ever listen to me. I'm going to have to take it upon myself to make sure he gets to rest."

Ryefeather made his way out of the den. He walked over Cheetahstar's and poked his head inside to see if the brown spotted tom was inside.

Luckily he was finishing off his prey. He glanced up at the cat entering into the den.

"Is there something you need, Ryefeather?" he asked.

"Yeah, it is about Blackstep. I'm worried about him. He hasn't been doing well these past few days. I think it is about time for him to join the elders, but he is too stubborn and doesn't want to go. I was wondering if you might be able to convince him."

"I'll do my best, but if he really does need to retire then I make sure that he'll go. Do you think you can handle all the duties by yourself?"

"If there was anything I needed then Blackstep is only a few pawsteps away."

Cheetahstar nodded and waved goodbye with his tail. Ryefeather dipped his head to thank the tom.

I sure hope that Cheetahstar will be able to convince Blackstep. It should be good for him to get lots of rest every day and not to have to worry about tending to the whole clan.

Ryefeather went back to the medicine cats' den. The black tom was now passed out in his bed. Laid there almost unmoving like he was dead, but a quick flick of his ear made it show that he was just sleeping.

Ryefeather picked up the pile of herbs he dropped earlier and started to sort through those while keeping a close eye on his mentor sleeping next to him.

Chapter 18

[image]

Pinepaw flicked his eyes open. He raised his head and looked around the den he was in. *Good, I'm back in Morningclan again*. He was in Sunstep's den.

The golden and white tom padded inside of the den. He came over when he saw the young apprentice had woken up.

"How are you feeling?" he asked as he checked him.

"I feel normal. Why am I in here?" Pinepaw looked at the medicine cat.

"You fainted at the clearing. Stormwhisker came rushing into my den with you on his back. He said you looked completely fine and then you crashed to the ground."

Pinepaw shifted in his nest and noticed feeling some warmth beside him. He glanced over and saw Tawnypaw curled up next to him as she slept.

"She insisted that she would stay by your side. She looked very worried as they brought you in."

The tortoiseshell apprentice rose her head. She blinked her eyes open. "Pinepaw! You're awake!" She sprung up on her paws. "Are you alright? You just randomly fainted during practice."

"I feel just fine. I must have been tired," he replied.

"He is free to go. There isn't anything wrong." They dipped their heads to Sunstep as Pinepaw got on his feet. He and Tawnypaw padded outside of the den.

Sandypaw and Cloverpaw came running from the other side of camp when they saw their littermate coming out of the medicine

cats' den. They showered him with their worried expressions but Pinepaw reassured that he was completely fine.

"Did anything happen while you fainted?" Cloverpaw asked.

"I did have this weird dream. It was like old Morningclan. Everyone kept calling me Dustpaw and I had a sister named Rainpaw."

"It was just a dream. Nothing to be worried about," Sandypaw exclaimed. "You have your sisters right here."

"It is nice to see you're okay," Pinepaw turned around and saw Snowpaw standing behind him.

"Nothing to worry about."

"Little piney can't even fight without passing out," Foxpaw trotted over and began to tease the brown tom.

"Go away, Foxpaw. Nobody wants to hear that right now," Tawnypaw hissed. "It could have been something really bad." Foxpaw huffed and padded away leaving the group alone.

Pinepaw sat down as Cloverpaw dragged over a minnow for him to eat. His mind flashed back to the dream. He remembered him and Rainpaw fishing for minnows in the river. He shook his head to get rid of the thoughts and focused back on everything around him.

Berrypool and Rowanfrost padded over to the group. "You had me worried Pinepaw. Don't do something like that again. Luckily, Sunstep said that you were just tired," Berrypool rambled. She then licked the top of his head.

"I'm fine. I am ready to go out and train again," he said.

"No can do. Lionstar told me that you had to rest a couple of days before we get you back to training again," Stormwhisker said as he made his way over to the expanding group.

"But I'm perfectly fine. I'm all hyped up," Pinepaw whined.

"Leader's orders."

His tail drooped down and plopped himself onto the ground. He began to eat the minnow that Cloverpaw had brought to him.

Eventually, everyone left. They had training before the day ended. He sat outside of the apprentices' den waiting for them all to come back from training.

He stood on his paws and padded into the den. He curled up in his nest and let his eyes droop down as he fell asleep.

~~~~~~~

Pinepaw opened his eyes from the shining sun outside. *Is it morning already?* He stretched out his limbs before standing up on his paws.

"Finally you're awake, Dustpaw!" Rainpaw popped her head inside of the den.

He shooked the remaining moss bits off of his pelt and followed the light gray she-cat out of the den. They padded over to the clearing where Dapplesnow and Icefern were at.

"Finally you're up," Dapplesnow snickered.

Icefern took no notice to the grumpy she-cat. "We're going to begin training for the apprentice contests. You'll be competing against one another and Colepaw."

Back then they also had the apprentices' contests. These have been going on for a while then, Pinepaw thought.

The two mentors took them out into territory. They lead them to the open lake.

"Are we really fishing in this competition?" Rainpaw whined as she sat next to the bank.

"There are three competitions. Hunting, fighting, and scenting. Your score in the competitions will greatly affect when you shall
~~~~~~~

receive your warrior name," Dapplesnow replied.

As the four of them sat on the bank, a big fluffy orange tom came walking over to them.

"That's right. After I won first in the competitions, Mackerelstar made me a warrior at the age of ten moons," he bragged.

"I don't believe you a bit, Yellowfang. No apprentice would be able to become a warrior at ten moons," Rainpaw retorted.

"You would be surprised." With that, he flicked his fluffy tail at them and disappeared in the forest shrubs.

There were so many things that were different back then. You really have to prove yourself if you were to become a warrior. I wonder if anybody had to wait longer before they received their full warrior name. That would really suck.

They spent their day fishing until sunhigh. Icefern and Dapplesnow allowed them to eat before going out and doing battle practice for the rest of the day. The apprentices' contest was only just a few days away. Pinepaw felt a little bit nervous. *I have to participate in two contests because I keep coming here.*

Dustpaw padded into the den after a long day. He let out a huge yawn and plopped down on his bed. Colepaw was in there as well. The black tom had already passed out for the night. He closed his eyes and allowed the darkness to overtake his body.

~~~~~~~

Pinepaw woke up in his original nest. It was the second day of his rest. Tomorrow he'll finally be able to get back into training again.

He looked over to his side and saw Tawnypaw fast asleep. He smiled down at the tortoiseshell she-cat. They've been getting closer with one another more now. Tawnypaw hated when she had to leave his side. He also comforted her whenever Foxpaw would go off and tease her since Tawnypaw wasn't born in Morningclan.
~~~~~~~

He nudged her shoulder. She almost immediately woke up. She smiled when she saw him looking a lot better.

When he fainted, her heart had stopped and she wouldn't dare to leave the brown tom's side. She would help Sunstep give him the herbs he needed.

"Good morning," Pinepaw said.

"You're looking a lot better. How are you feeling?" she asked.

"I told you yesterday, I'm completely fine. There's nothing to worry about."

Tawnypaw nuzzled into his chest fur. Pinepaw placed his head on top of hers.

"Can you not do that here? Nobody wants to watch both of you moon over each other," Foxpaw gagged. The red she-cat padded out of the den with her head and tail raised high.

"Pinepaw and Tawnypaw are going to make such cute kits!" Cloverpaw squealed off to the side with Sandypaw.

"Be quiet," Pinepaw told them but they didn't listen.

"Don't mind them," Tawnypaw said and touched their noses together. Pinepaw felt calm once again.

They both made their way outside of the den. A familiar white she-cat stood out there. A smirk was plastered on her face.

"The lovebirds are up."

"At least I've found someone, Snowheart," Tawnypaw retorted.

Snowheart was made a full warrior just a moon ago. Her older siblings, Riverstripe and Streamsong, cheered for her so loud that it was hard to hear Lionstar tell the young warrior her new name.

"What is going to happen when you become a warrior? Isn't your assessment today?"

"Then I'll wait for him. I'll wait as long as I need too." The two of them began to purr.

"Tawnypaw! Come on, you have a big day today. Stop mooning around with Pinepaw and let's go!" Tawnypaw's mentor, Ottersplash, called out. She gave Pinepaw a lick on his ear before trotting away after her mentor.

All the other apprentices then began to leave, he was the only one in camp. He tried to ask Stormwhisker if he could go out on a walk, but the light brown tabby tom insisted on him staying in the camp.

Pinepaw laid outside just watching each of the gray clouds past through the sky.

~~~~~~~

"Tawnypaw, for this moment on you'll be known as Tawnypool. Starclan honors your passion for your clan and we welcome you as a full warrior of Morningclan."

The clan cheers rang through the camp as they all chanted the new warrior's name. "Tawnypool! Tawnypool! Tawnypool!"

She turned back to face Pinepaw. He chanted even loud so that his voice would excel over the other clan members.

She came running over to him. "I'm so proud of you," He told her.

"Now it is your turn."

"I'll do my best."
~~~~~~~

Chapter 19

[image]

Everyday was filled with sadness. Nothing made Honeysong happy. She refused to get out of her nest. Mouseshine would always encourage her to do her exercises but she would always refuse.

"Come on, Honeysong. You laying here won't make you any better," the gray tabby she-cat told her.

"I deserved to be hurt. I should never get better," she said.

"Barkpelt wouldn't want you to do this to yourself. Please just do a few exercises." Honeysong only shook her head. She continued to stare out in the clearing of camp as all the warriors were arriving back from their morning patrols.

Mouseshine matched out of the den in defeat. She's tried so many times to help Honeysong and none of it works.

Honeysong flipped over in the moss. She gritted her teeth with the fiery pain that shot through her leg. She carefully placed it back down on the ground.

She saw her two friends, Frostpaw and Mintpaw just entering camp. Actually just the other day, Curlstar had appointed them as warriors. Mintpaw received the warrior name Mintspark while Frostpaw received the warrior name Frostcloud. Honeysong could only watch from the medicine cat's den. She wanted to congratulate the two but they never came over to speak to her. They probably thought she wanted to be left alone. They weren't wrong but she wished she could tell them that they would be fine warriors.

"Honeysong." A voice called to her from outside the den. She moved her head over to see Dustywing standing out there. A sadden expression was on his face. "Mouseshine told me that you aren't doing your exercises. Could you please do them? For me, at least?"

"Barkpelt is dead because of me. I deserve to be injured," she murmured. "And why should I do them for you? I have no point to be healthy."

"Because I care about you. Heatherheart does too. We want you two be healthy. If Barkpelt was still alive, he would want you to be too."

Honeysong just huffed and turned her head away from him. He padded up to her and rested his paw down on her shoulder. She glanced up at him. She could see the worry in his eyes. She thought about it for a second before deciding to try and stand. His eyes immediately lit up. He ran out and called for Mouseshine.

The medicine cat eyes grew big once she entered the den. She didn't expect to see the cream tabby on her paws. She turned and dipped her head over to the tom.

Honeysong grunted in pain as she finally used her leg after a few days. Mouseshine helped her with each exercise in order to help strengthen her leg.

~~~~~~~

After a moon, Honeysong was finally able to move around camp again. Dustywing was a big support to her. He would always be there to help her in the morning. He took over helping her with her exercises

Heatherheart would also stop in a couple times during the day to check up on her former apprentice.

"When will I be able to continue my duties?" Honeysong asked the medicine cat who just arrived back from resting out in the sun.

"With this progress maybe after a few more days you'll be able to do some light work," she responded.

"But no hard work. I don't want to ruin all the progress we've made over this moon," Dustywing meowed. Honeysong felt her fur spark up in excitement.
~~~~~~~

Just then, all the memories from the battle with the fox flowed through her mind. The picture of her father's dead body that lay in front of her. The sadness she felt during those days. All of them came back. Her heart felt sore. She tried to not let it show but Dustywing caught it.

"Don't worry. I won't stray too far from you. I'll always be by your side," he told her. She nodded. She felt a little bit better.

"I'm going to get a little rest," she told everyone. She limped back off to the medicine cat's den. The sun was alright starting to go down anyways so it was a perfect excuse to get away from everyone. She wanted to be alone right now. She laid herself down in the bed. She closed her eyes, hoping for a little peace.

Honeysong shot her eyes open. Fierce winds blew past her. Rain pounded down on the ground all around her. She scrambled to grab a hold of the tree. She managed to dig her claws into the soft bark.

It is the same dream as before, *she told herself.*

The tree she was holding onto, became to shake as the winds started to blow it up in the air. She tried to get off, but was unsuccessful. She dug her claws in more so the winds wouldn't blow her off the tree.

She rose into the sky. Cats were all around her yowling out for their families, seeing any of them were around them.

Why do I keep having this dream? *Honeysong moved her head and saw something that blew her mind. A giant gray cloud looked as if it was spinning around. All the trees and branches all moved towards the cloud. She could see a few cats also being drifted over to the gray cloud.*

I've never seen anything like this. This is too real to be a dream. Why does it keep popping up?

Honeysong flew past one of the cats. It was a black tom. She could pick up a clan scent on him but the winds were too strong for her to tell exactly what clan he was from. He looked as if he had nothing to live for. His grip loosen and the winds quickly blew him away from the tree branch.

She watched him disappear in the air. She tried to climb up higher on the branch to see where. She unhooked one of her paws and that was the end. Her three other paws were pulled right out of the bark. She felt them burn as a couple of her claws were pulled out of her paws.

She couldn't worry about that now. She had to dodge from the objects in the air. She would be ducking under branches and leaping over trees. Until a huge gust of wind pulled her unexpectedly.

Her body was flung through the air and she felt herself come smashing into a tree, turning her vision into darkness.

Honeysong jolted up. Her breathing was rapid. She looked around and let out a sigh seeing that she was in the medicine cat's den. Dustywing was curled up by her side. He looked as if he was in a peaceful sleep.

The black tom raised his head up. "Is everything alright?" he asked. His tail plopped down on her back in order to comfort the cream she-cat.

Honeysong nodded her head and tried to go back to sleep. Dustywing wasn't happy with her answer.

"No cat wakes up like that for no good reason."

"Alright, I'll tell you but you have to promise not to tell anybody," she told him. He got his approval as Honeysong went on to tell him all about the dreams of the storm and the giant cloud.

"It must be a dream. Now lay down and go back to sleep."

"But it felt too real to be a dream."

"Just forget about it and just go to sleep," he soothed her. She nodded and laid her head back down on her paws. She closed her eyes, wishing that the dream won't happen again.

After Honeysong and Dustywing had already fallen asleep, Mouseshine's ear flicked. Her head rose up to look at the two snuggling up with one another. A smile appeared on her face.

"*I think I've found the cat of the prophecy*," She whispered to herself.

Chapter 20

[image]

Pinepaw started out the entrance of the apprentices' den. A couple of days ago he was finally able to train once again. Stormwhisker was working him hard for the contest today.

After days of training, it was finally time. They were to gather in the training hollow after sunrise. The dawn patrol has only just left.

"Are you ready?!" Sandypaw jumps up behind him. "You won't even lay a paw on me."

"Pinepaw would just sit on you and win," Cloverpaw popped up next to them.

"I'd like to see him try."

"All of you are going down. The more experience apprentice will definitely win," Foxpaw hissed at them.

"If Tawnypool and Snowheart were still apprentices, they would destroy you before you could say fish," Sandypaw retorted.

"That is what we have to discuss," Rowanfrost came up. A smile slid across his face. "Lionstar thought it would be good for Tawnypool and Snowheart to participate in one last contest. They are newly made warriors so don't let them scare you."

Pinepaw felt his fur fluff out. He was happy to spend the day with Tawnypool. It has been hard now that the tortoiseshell she-cat is a full warrior now and he has to worry about his training.

All the mentors and apprentices along with Snowheart and Tawnypool all made their way to the training hollow.

Ravenfall stood in the center getting ready to make his first announcements. "The first part is tracking. You all will be separated from another and your mentors will be hidden in your area. You

must scent them out. Since Snowheart and Tawnypool don't have mentors anymore then they'll take turns using each other."

Stormwhisker took Pinepaw away from the group. The light brown tabby tom led him to his spot.

"You'll stay here. Give me a few seconds before you try to find me. I won't go easy on you since you're my apprentice."

Pinepaw dipped his head and watched as his mentor disappeared in the bushes. He sat there and looked at the birds flying around in the treetops above him.

After a few, Pinepaw stood up and began to look for Stormwhisker. His mouth dropped down as all the scents from around him bathed on his tongue. He picked up a small scent of his mentor and immediately took off in that direction.

Stormwhisker wanted to make it hard for him as the tabby tom weaved throughout a bunch of trees and bushes. Pinepaw continued looking around for Stormwhisker until the scent just stopped. Pinepaw smelled around, but he didn't pick up the scent anymore.

That means he must have gone up. I should be close to him now, Pinepaw thought. He climbed up a tree that was near where the scent last was. He carefully leaped through a couple of nearby trees, but couldn't find his mentor.

He sat in the tree and opened his mouth. The scent of Stormwhisker hit his tongue. He followed it and went a little higher before spotting the light brown tabby hidden in the shelter of the leaves.

"I was being to wonder if you would ever find me," he said once the two had their paws back on the ground. "Let's get back to the hollow." They padded back through the bushes to the hollow.

Only Foxpaw and Rowanfrost were there. They sat together and spoke with one another.

"Finally one of you is back. I guess Stormwhisker made it easy on you," Foxpaw hissed.

"What did we talk about Foxpaw? You shouldn't be insulting the other apprentices. They are also my kin," Rowanfrost said sternly. Foxpaw let out a huff but didn't say anything else.

"How did Pinepaw do?" Rowanfrost asked, curious about how his kit is doing in training.

"He followed the scent well until my little trick worked. I went into a tree and leaped over a few before hiding in the leaves. He seemed to understand I was in the trees, but couldn't find me right away," Stormwhisker reported.

"It is nice to hear how well you're doing." Rowanfrost looked at him proudly. Pinepaw puffed out his chest fur. It felt great to hear words of praise from his father.

It wasn't long before the others arrived back. Snowheart and Tawnypool took a little bit longer since they each had to find one another before they could meet back up.

"Now for the second part. Everyone will compete in a hunting tournament. One of us mentors will say a type of fish or prey that you must track down and hunt. Whoever brings it back first wins that round. There will be a total of five rounds. The first prey is a trout," Ravenfall called out.

Pinepaw ran off to the curtain part of the river where he knows there are the most trouts. He was one of the best fishers out of all the apprentices. Sandypaw was great at hunting the birds that will sometimes land in the muddy areas to find worms. Cloverpaw was good at sneaking out prey on land. They of course were good at fishing because they live in Morningclan, but Pinepaw was more skilled at fishing than his siblings.

"Go away you fish brain," Foxpaw appeared at his side. She hissed at him and used her bigger body and knocked the apprentice off his paws. He flew down to the ground. He quickly got back on his paws and shook the leaves off of his pelt.

He took off back down to the river. Foxpaw had already arrived there first. She was glancing down into the water trying to find a

trout swimming by.

Pinepaw went a little bit downstream in case if Foxpaw were to dive into the water all of his fish wouldn't take off.

He peered into the water beneath him. His eyes darted around to see if he could make out a trout swimming around in the water.

He heard Foxpaw dive into the water but the red apprentice came back empty-pawed. She cursed to herself before going a little upstream since all the fish had swum away.

Something caught Pinepaw's eyes. He looked down in the water and saw a big trout swimming past him. He checked to make sure his shadow wasn't on the water and then readied himself to splash into the river. He latched his jaws on a fish and kicked his hind legs to swim back up to shore.

He dropped the fish on the ground. He felt his fur rise in happiness when the trout flopped around in front of him. He quickly killed the fish before taking it in his jaws and took off back to the training hollow. As he ran away, he heard Foxpaw snickered.

Pinepaw arrived back in the hollow. All the mentors stood around speaking with one another. Pinepaw dropped the trout in front of Stormwhisker.

"That is definitely one big trout," Birchclaw praised. Pinepaw puffed out his chest fur.

"You're also the first one back," Ravenfall said.

Foxpaw then came running back into the training hollow. A trout also hung from her jaws.

"That little fish face stole my trout. I had to find another one in time so I could make it back in time."

All the warriors turned their heads to look at him. "That isn't true. You failed to catch it and it swam downstream. I caught it after you failed to do so."

"Liar!" Foxpaw growled.

"Enough," Rowanfrost interrupted. "I believe Pinepaw is telling the truth. He won the first round. I don't want to hear anything more about it." Foxpaw lashed out her tail but didn't say anything more.

The rest of the day went by fast. All of the apprentices and the two warriors did well in each challenge. All of the mentors had lots of praise to report back to Lionstar.

The big leader called out a clan meeting. Everyone gathered in the clearing at their leader's call.

"I have received lots of good reports back from the warriors working with the apprentices' contest. I have made the decision to make a new warrior in Morningclan. Foxpaw please come forward."

Pinepaw looked over at the red she-cat. Her head was held high as she made her way up to the front.

"Rowanfrost gave me much praise about your performance. With a discussion with your mentor, we've decided it was time to make you a full warrior. I, Lionstar, leader of Morningclan call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. She has trained hard to learn the way of your noble code and now I command her as a warrior in your turn. Foxpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to defend your clan, even if it costs your life?"

"I do," Foxpaw replied confidently.

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I shall give you your warrior name." He leaped down to stand in front of the red-colored she-cat. "Foxpaw from this moment on you'll be known as Foxshade. Starclan honors your braveness and we welcome you as a full warrior of Morningclan."

She licked the leader's shoulder before the clan began to call out her new name. "Foxshade! Foxshade! Foxshade!"

Pinepaw and the rest of them didn't chant out her name too loudly knowing how much the new warrior was going to tease them now.

"Don't worry. Someday that will be you up there," Tawnypool said as she nuzzled Pinepaw.

Along with Foxshade's warrior ceremony, Lionstar also announced Littlestep retiring to the elders. The old white dappled she-cat looked so healthy that everyone didn't remember how old the she-cat was. She was also the mother of Lionstar and Sunstep. She licked her two kits before going over and greeted the three other elders.

She was warmly welcomed by the new arrival and helped create a moss bed for her to sleep on.

The moon was setting and Pinepaw let out a yawn. He said good night to Tawnypool and Snowheart before they went off to the warrior's den. He and his littermates went off to their own den which now felt a lot emptier than before.

"Now it is just us," Cloverpaw said.

"I guess we should enjoy it while it lasts. It won't be too long before Applekit and Dustkit become apprentices. They're related to Foxshade, so let's hope they're not like their sister," Sandypaw said.

They all laid down in their nests. Enjoying the peaceful night, Pinepaw closed his eyes and allowed the darkness to overtake him.

Chapter 21

[image]

Today was the day. The day that Tinyslip has been stressing over for a while now. Brackenkit was going to be apprenticed today. Tinyslip was supposed to become his mentor today.

Judging by the weather, Tinyslip could tell that it wasn't going to be a good first day. It had just stopped pouring and Flamestar wanted to quickly get the ceremony over with before it would begin raining again.

Tinyslip walked out into the clearing along with all of the other warriors. Creamspot and Maplepelt joined in as well. The two received their warrior names a few days ago. They were still saddened over their mother's death but participated in duties. Yellowflight has been taking of Silentkit and Bumblekit very well. He always made sure they were well fed and had good manners to all the warriors and apprentices.

"Brackenkit has reached the age of six moons and is ready to become an apprentice," Flamestar looked over straight at her. "Tinyslip please pass down your kindness onto your new apprentice."

Tinyslip padded to the front. Brackenpaw stared up at her with bright eyes. She could tell he was ready to learn. She leaned down as the two touched noses. The clan began to cheer out Brackenpaw's new apprentice name.

"Brackenpaw! Brackenpaw! Brackenpaw!"

"Can we go out to explore the territory now?" He asked.

"I guess we better get going before it starts raining." She led the light brown tom. The grass was still wet. Luckily, Brackenpaw didn't complain about his paws being wet. He was actively jumping around and asking many questions.

"When do we get to the river? I heard across is where Meadowclan and Cottonclan live. Where is Morningclan's territory? Have you been in any of the other camps?"

"One question at a time," Tinyslip chuckled. "The river is right up ahead. Yes, Cottonclan and Meadowclan are on the other side. Morningclan is the opposite way. And no, I haven't been in any of the other clan's camps."

"How do they cross the river?" Brackenpaw asked as we stopped next to the river.

"There are stones that they can hop over farther downstream. They only use them when there is a gathering."

"Has anybody fallen in the river before?"

"A lot of apprentices do in leafbare because they didn't check the ice before hopping on it." Tinyslip raised her nose. The smell of rain was drifting towards her. "I think we better get back to camp before it starts pouring."

Tinyslip turned her head to look at the apprentice, but he wasn't there. She looked around for him. He had disappeared. She sniffed around for his scent. Finally, she caught it and followed it through the pine trees.

It wasn't until she heard a cry from in the distance. Brackenpaw! She began to spirit towards the noise. She stopped and calmed down a little when she saw the familiar pelt in the bushes.

"Brackenpaw!" She yelled out for him. He turned towards her and tried running over to her, but he had a limp in his paw.

"Tinyslip, I'm sorry! I saw a bird and tried to catch it to impress you but it took off and I went after it. When I tried to catch it, I landed in the thorn bush and I got a thorn in my pad."

She peered at his foot and saw a small thorn peaking out. "Let's get you back then. Gorseshine and Robinheart can take a look at it."

It was a long journey back, or so it felt like. Brackenpaw couldn't

walk so he had to hop all the way there. Fernstep had come running up to them when they entered the camp.

"What happened?!"

"Brackenpaw only got a small thorn in his paw," Tinyslip reassured her.

"How did he get a thorn in his paw? You were exploring the territory," Fernstep hissed.

"He took off to catch a bird. I didn't know he was gone."

"You should have kept your eye on him! I trusted Flamestar to make you his mentor and now on his first day he is hurt!"

"You're overreacting a bit, Fernstep," Frogsplash said, padding over to the group. "It is a small thorn. Gorseshine could easily pull it out and he'll be back on his paws tomorrow."

Fernstep didn't say anything and marched away to Flamestar's den. Tinyslip helped the apprentice over to the medicine cats' den. Robinheart pulled out the thorn and cleaned up his pad.

Tinyslip now laid in the warriors' den. The rain had started up again, which she was thankful for. She didn't feel like going out after Fernstep yelling at her.

I should have kept my eye on Brackenpaw. He won't have gotten hurt if I watched him.

"I know what you're thinking and I want you to stop," she looked up and saw her father standing over her. "Every cat gets thorns in their paws. Fernstep is just worked up because she is worried. Brackenpaw is her only kit."

"Actually it won't be soon. I overheard Gorseshine and Robinheart talking. They said that she is pregnant again. Flamestar must want to keep the kits coming."

"Well, all the other clans talk about all their new kits being born at every gathering. The last one for us was Bumblekit and Silentkit

and what followed that news was that we lost a warrior."

"I guess."

"Now, get some rest. I'm sure tomorrow you have a long day of training for your new apprentice."

"That is if the rain stops tomorrow."

"Then let's hope."

That night, Tinyslip couldn't get any sleep. The rain was pounding hard on the den's roof. Eventually, some water began to drip into the den. Cats were whining from their pelt being wet.

Some of the warriors had to move to the apprentices' den or squeeze in with the elders. It was a very uncomfortable night for everyone.

"My back is sore from having to sleep on top of Darkwhisper," the deputy, Shadowear grumbled as he exited the elders' den.

"Tell me about it. I had Mudnose snoring in my ear all night," Burnpelt hissed.

"At least they allowed us to join them for the night," Dawnberry told them. They didn't reply back to her comment and went off speaking quietly to one another.

The ground outside of camp was so muddy. Tinyslip's paws would sink into the ground and would be hard to pull them out each time. She would have to pull them free from the dark, muddy earth. She wasn't going to be happy when she would go back to camp and have to clean the disgusting mud from her paws.

Brackenpaw's training also wasn't going well. With the rain, all the prey was camping out in their own dens to shelter from it. Brackenpaw had to continually practice on a leaf for most of the time.

"When will all this rain stop?" the apprentice whined. "I'm not finding any kind of prey to catch."

"If we give it a few days, then it should clear up and all the prey will be running in the forest again," Tinyslip reassured him.

"Can we do battle training instead? There isn't any prey anyway."

"Alright, but let's find a place that isn't so muddy." He nodded and followed her through the pine forest. They had to go to a more rocky spot to get away from all the mud. It wasn't too pointy that they would step on all the rocks here.

"Since this is your first battle practice, you can't learn anything too extreme." The light brown tabby frowned but didn't complain. Tinyslip showed him the grab and hold. "You will try and flip your opponent over by doing this. Remember that they will also try to do the same to you."

She demonstrated the move first before allowing the tom to try it on her. His form was alright but needed to put forth a little more power.

"Don't be afraid of doing it a little more forcefully. It won't hurt me," she smiled at him. He nodded and they redid the move. This time he forced her over a little harder. "That was better." His tail swished happily from the praise he received.

They stayed there a little longer before they had to sprint back to camp from the upcoming rain that started to sprinkle down. It wasn't long after that arrived that it began to pour once again.

"It has never rained like this before," Tinyslip told her father, who sat next to her.

"Well, it has rained for a few days. It has never really done something like this before. We can hardly hunt before we have to run back to camp to save our pelts from being wet."

"I bet Morningclan is enjoying the weather," Tinyslip jokes.

"I'm sure they don't like being wet all the time," Frogsplash said.

They sat in the nests and began to clean all the mud and dirt from their fur to pass the time in order for them to leave camp again.

They talked with the other warriors who were also cramped up with them in the apprentices' den.

Chapter 22

[image]

Ryefeather was walking into camp after gathering a few herbs. All the rain had made all the herbs soaking wet. Now Ryefeather and Blackstep couldn't dry them off in the sun.

As Ryefeather padded into the den, it was empty. He didn't remember Blackstep saying he had anything to do. *Maybe something came up while I was gone,* Ryefeather thought. He placed the herbs down near the den entrance just in case the sun would appear out through the clouds.

"Hi, Ryefeather." He turned his head to the new voice in the den. A purr rumbled in his throat when he saw Wolfshine standing there. "How's the day been?"

"With nobody really going out because of the rain, it has been quite a simple day," he replied.

"Is Blackstep here?" He shook his head. She leaned forward and quickly licked his cheek.

"You're becoming quite the rebel. Anybody outside of the den could have seen that."

"I'll just say that you had something on it."

They sat and chatted with one another before Wolfshine was called to go out on patrol. Not long after she left, Ryefeather became worried about the old black medicine cat. He hasn't come back ever since he disappeared.

Ryefeather padded out and looked around the camp. Off to the side, Mossypaw was there with his mentor, Crowglade, getting ready for his final assignment.

On the other side, Rabbitstorm sat with Dewspring as their three

kits played around in front of them. They have turned six moons now and were to become apprentices. Ryefeather could see how happy the tom was with his new family. He looked away as his fur rose in anger. *He has never cared about you and never will. I'll also show that I feel nothing for him as well.*

Now that half the day has passed, Ryefeather thought it was a good time to search for the missing medicine cat.

As soon as he stood up, Cheetahstar's call rang through the camp. Ryefeather sighed and went to watch the ceremony, not that he cared about the new apprentices.

Ryefeather didn't pay much attention. His thoughts were focused on Blackstep. The calls of the clan cheering their names broke him out of his thoughts.

"Shinepaw! Badgerpaw! Wildpaw!"

Along with the apprentice ceremony, there was Mossypaw's warrior ceremony where he received his warrior name, Mossyleaf. He stood proud and tall during the whole ceremony.

Once it was over, Ryefeather went over to Cheetahstar. He was just coming down from the ledge he stood on when he had clan meetings.

"Cheetahstar, I need to talk to you," he told him urgently.

"What is it?"

"Blackstep has been gone for a long time now. He disappeared while I was out gathering a few herbs. He hasn't been back since. He doesn't do that especially now when he is so old and feeble."

"I'll organize a search party then," he turned out to call a few of the warriors, "Iceleap, Swiftcloud, Eagletail, and Harerunner. I need you to go and try to find Blackstep. Ryefeather said he had gone missing since just after sunrise."

They nodded respectfully and padded out of the camp. Ryefeather couldn't help but hope that they'll bring the old

medicine cat back safely.

Ryefeather sent the rest of his time poking out every so often to see if they would return with Blackstep unharmed.

"Ryefeather, we need you," Hazelflower padded into the den with Ravenpaw and Windbreeze. "Ravenpaw hasn't stopped coughing all day and I'm starting to get worried."

He went over to check the apprentice. He made sure it wasn't a whitecough or greencough.

"He just has a cold. Here's some honey for his sore throat and feverfew. He just needs some rest now and should be fit in a couple of days."

They thanked him before leaving. Ryefeather sat in the entrance and waited. He couldn't keep his mind off Blackstep.

Wolfshine noticed the male constantly staring at the entrance. She padded over to him, worried.

"I'm sure he is fine. Blackstep will return safely," she reassured him.

"This isn't like him. He would never disappear like this. Something must have happened to him. I know it," he said.

"Have some positivity. Believe he'll be okay." He only shook his head but never let his gaze linger.

Wolfshine left and padded back with a thrush in her mouth. "Please eat something, Ryefeather. I'm starting to get worried about you." She dropped it in front of him.

He leaned down and took a couple of bites before scooting it back to her. "You can have the rest."

"No! Eat please, Ryefeather!" Her voice rose slightly. He gave in and began to chew on the meat of the thrush. He didn't want to make Wolfshine worry too much about him. He did care a lot about her and wanted her to feel okay too.

He looked up at her. She smiled down at him and licked the top of his head. He was grateful to know someone as kind and sweet as Wolfshine. She always treated him well every day. He couldn't have been happier with a different she-cat.

He knew all this was wrong, but his heart told him it was all right. He couldn't lie to himself that he enjoyed every moment he spent with Wolfshine. Maybe he shouldn't have become a medicine cat and just become a warrior, but he couldn't now. His clan relies on him and being a medicine cat felt amazing to treat all his clanmates every day. He was glad. His life was perfect the way it was. He didn't want to change it no matter what his head tells him.

~~~~~~~

"Cheetahstar!" A voice rang through the camp as the search party came running inside. Their pelts were soaked. Ryefeather hoped that none of them would get sick because of it.

Ryefeather quickly looked to see them returning. He quietly searched around to see if Blackstep stood among them. He was nowhere to be seen. His tail dropped in disappointment.

"Did you find him?" Cheetahstar said loudly due to the rain that was pounding around them.

"Iceleap thought she picked up his scent, but we lost it once the rain began," Swiftcloud replied.

"We'll continue tomorrow. We can't have any warriors getting sick now."

Ryefeather wanted to protest but he knew that the leader was right. He slowly padded back into the medicine cats' den. He gazed over to Blackstep's moss bed. He wished that he would be fine and would come back healthy once the sun rose the next morning.

The next day, Cheetahstar sent out another search party. They've been gone for a while now. It was sunhigh as the warriors began to settle down to share tongues with one another.
~~~~~~~

Wolfshine continued to check on the young medicine cat. She made sure he ate properly. She would also help out with cleaning up the den while he would tend to the cats. He kept an eye on Ravenpaw to make sure he was fine.

"Are you feeling okay, Wolfshine? You seem a lot tired lately." He stopped and thought about it. He looked closely at the beautiful she-cat before saying, "You're pregnant, aren't you?"

"Surprise," she said and sat down next to him. "What are we going to do? I haven't really been around any of the other toms beside you. They are going to know that these kits are yours."

"Don't worry. We'll just say that I noticed something usually about your pregnancy and wanted to keep a close eye on you."

"I'm happy to have these kits with you, Ryefeather." She nuzzled under his jaw. He let out a purr of happiness. *I'm going to be a father!*

A loud yowl interrupted their precious moment. Ryefeather raced out of the den and stopped when he saw the search party. Moorpatch, Plumbreeze, Brindlefrost, and Crowglade all stood around a certain body.

Ryefeather couldn't believe it. His heart stopped beating for a second once they moved away. Blackstep laid there looking lifeless. He could tell that the now former medicine cat was dead.

Chapter 23

[image]

Honeysong tried to protect her pelt from the sudden downfall of rain that began to pour down while she was out on a walk. Her leg was almost healed now and Mouseshine suggested for her to go on a walk around the territory to stretch it out a little more.

Honeysong entered the camp and everyone was already tucked inside the dens to shelter from the rain. She made her way back over to the medicine cats' den. Dustywing and Mouseshine stood inside together.

"You're back. I was thinking the rain had swept you away," Dustywing sounded worried.

"I'm fine, just a little wet now," she reassured him.

"Let me help you get dry." The black tom came over and licked her fur in the opposite direction to make the water dry faster. Honeysong did the same until her fur was almost completely dry. It was just a little damp now.

The day was like most days now. The rain would just pour down nonstop. Sometimes warriors would have to go out and hunt for the clan to eat even though the rain was pouring down. It has been like this for days now. The prey pile was kept here in the medicine cats' den to ensure that none of it was rotten due to the rain. Mouseshine would check each piece that would enter into the den.

"I hope this rain will stop soon. Prey is more scarce now that most of the warriors and apprentices aren't hunting and the prey is also hiding from the rain," Mouseshine said.

Honeysong nodded her head. She laid down in her moss bed. With all this rain reminded her of the dream she's been having, with the giant wind cloud that sucked up cats.

Should I tell Mouseshine about it? I say something when Dustywing isn't here. I don't want to worry him.

She waited a while until Heatherheart called the tom to go and hunt. He had a pouty expression but didn't argue with the deputy.

Mouseshine was in the back checking her herbs. Honeysong stood up and made her way over to her.

"Can I talk to you about something?" she asked.

"Go ahead," the gray tabby she-cat said and turned around to look at her.

"I've been having these weird dreams lately. It is raining really hard and the wind was blowing so fast. It sounds unbelievable, but I was carried into the sky by the wind. It was picking up trees and blowing them all around the forest. It could just be some silly dream but I just continually have this dream almost every night," Honeysong said.

"Honeysong, I believe there is something special about you," Mouseshine said. Honeysong cocked her head, not understanding what the medicine cat was saying. "Remember the prophecy."

"Yeah."

"You're one of the cats that can help the clans. The dream you're having, I believe it is what is going to happen to us soon. At the Gathering tomorrow, you'll need to share this with all the clans."

"Are you sure? I don't think Starclan would pick me to be a special cat in the prophecy."

"But they did. This storm sounds like it isn't going to be easy for any of us."

"I know many cats will be hurt or killed. I saw them as I was flying around in the sky. I was even slammed against trees and branches. We need to figure something out on what we can do."

"If we could discover the other cat in the prophecy then the clans

could survive. I just hope they will be soon. With what you're telling me, I think the storm could happen in a few days."

After their conversation stopped, the rain had lightened up a little bit. Honeysong had grabbed a couple pieces of prey and brought them over to the nursery.

Sweetkit, Thistlekit, and Emberkit were all huddled in with their mother, Squirrelskip. Their voices rang from outside the den. They were whining about being kept inside the den when the rain had stopped for a bit.

"Can we please go out? The rain has stopped. I don't want to stay in here anymore. It is boring," Thistlekit complained.

"I told you no. The rain could start any moment and I don't want you to soak the nursery again," Squrrielskip told them. Their ears and tails drooped down and they laid off in the far corner of the den, not wanting to be near their mother.

"How about some prey to fill those empty bellies," Honeysong said as she entered the den.

They jumped up and ran over to collect their share of the prey. Squirrelskip dipped her head in thanks before Honeysong waved goodbye with a flick of her tail.

The next den was the elders. She brang a couple pieces of prey to the two elders of Cottonclan. Fuzzywhisker and Larkfeather sat, curled up with one another. The two still showed their love for one another besides their age. Although they have only one kit, Heatherheart, they still cared much about the clan.

"Are the two of you hungry?" She dropped the prey in front of them.

"Yes, very much. You can take the mouse back. We can share the vole. We haven't been eating much to make sure that everyone has been getting their fair share," Larkfeather said.

"Don't worry. Mouseshine making sure the whole clan has enough to eat. She is managing the prey pile until the rain has stopped," Honeysong reassured them.

"We're fine. Keep the mouse," Fuzzywhisker said and pushed the mouse back over to her.

Honeysong dipped her head and picked the mouse up in her jaws. She carried it back over to the medicine cats' den. Mouseshine was looking through the newly brought back pieces of prey, checking to make sure they are in good health.

"Fuzzywhisker and Larkfeather declined to have their own piece of prey. They wanted to make sure everyone was getting their fair share."

"I told them they needed it more. I guess I have to follow along with their wishes. You can take that to Curlstar. She hasn't been in here to snag some prey in a while," Mouseshine said.

Now she made her way to the leader's den. She called in to tell the light brown she-cat that she was there. The leader happily allowed her into the den.

"I have brought a mouse for you," Honeysong said as she dropped the mouse.

"Go give it to the nursery or elders. They need it more," Curlstar said, flicking her tail.

"They already got some. Mouseshine insisted that you eat."

"Then warriors need their strength."

"How can they be strong if their leader is sick from hunger?" Curlstar didn't say anything and took the mouse and began to eat.

"Thank you, Honeysong. How is the leg?"

"Mouseshine said that I should be able to go back to my duties tomorrow."

"That is nice to hear. I hope you'll feel better running through the forest again tomorrow."

"You bet I will," Honeysong waved with her tail and exited the den.

As the day went on, it began to rain again. Luckily, the warriors had brought back enough prey to feed the clan for tonight. Honeysong, Mouseshine, and Dustywing all went out and gave a certain amount of prey to each den. They were all glad to eat tonight and go to sleep without an empty stomach.

"I heard you're done with staying with Mouseshine tomorrow?" Dustywing asked.

"Yeah, she said I'm clear to begin my warrior duties tomorrow."

It was quiet for a couple of seconds. "Hey, Honeysong. Can I ask you something?"

"Sure, go ahead."

"Would you become my mate? I know you made it clear to me that you wanted to wait but the bond between us these past few moons have grown. I thought you might be alright with it now."

"Dustywing, I can't give you an answer now. I'm still a young warrior. I don't think I want to take on a mate right now. I want to enjoy life being free and only have to worry about myself. I'm just not ready right now," she told the black tom. He hung his head low and murmured something she couldn't hear. He walked off and left her alone for the rest of the day.

Chapter 24

[image]

Pinepaw followed his mentor through the pine trees that lead around to the Gathering area. The moon was full in the sky as it shone a bright path for the Morningclan cats to see their footsteps in front of them.

Pinepaw and his siblings were allowed to go to the first Gathering today. They could have gone to the last one, but they were younger apprentices then and they weren't ready to be shown to all the clans. It was hard to prevent himself from bouncing off the trees. All of them were too excited.

"I can't wait to meet all the cats there. I hope there will be lots of apprentices to talk to," Sandypaw yowled.

"I have to meet someone from each clan," Cloverpaw said.

"Making friends with other clans isn't bad. Just be sure to not give away any Morningclan secrets. We don't want them knowing our weaknesses," Birchclaw said.

They exited the pine forest and were out on an open clearing. Down the pathway, there were four great stones that stood up in the sky. Tall Stones housed each leader of the four clans. A symbol was scratched on each rock that showed what clan leader stood there.

His paws were covered in mud from all the rain that poured down earlier that day.

They entered the space. They were the first to arrive. Pinepaw couldn't believe his eyes. He's heard many stories of the Tall Stones, but he didn't expect them to be this big. He wondered how the leaders could jump up to them.

They waited a little bit before Marshclan padded into the clearing too. Their leader, Flamestar went around back and made his way up to stand on Marshclan's stone. He dipped his head over to Lionstar, who stood next to him.

"Come on! Let's see if there are any apprentices," Sandypaw called out to him.

They looked through all the Marshclan cats and couldn't find any cat who looked young.

"Maybe they don't have any," Cloverpaw sighed.
"Wait," Pinepaw said, after seeing a small tom pad closely next to his mentor. "He looks like one." Pinepaw pointed with his tail.

The three leaped up onto their paws and ran over to the young tom. He looked alarmed when he saw them prancing over to him.

"Hi! You look like an apprentice. I'm Sandypaw and these are my siblings, Pinepaw and Cloverpaw," Sandypaw said.

"Look, Brackenpaw. You've made friends already," the gray and white she-cat murmured to him. She scooted him forward to meet the three new cats.

"Hi, I'm Brackenpaw of Marshclan. I'm a new apprentice and this is my first Gathering," he introduced himself.

"This is ours too. We couldn't come to the last one. Lionstar thought it was for the best," Pinepaw said.

As they were talking for a bit, Meadowclan arrived. They had the most apprentice out of all the clans. They had two named Morningpaw and Ravenpaw, who were their age, and three named Shinepaw, Wildpaw, and Badgerpaw, who were Brackenpaw's age.

"Is this your first Gathering too?" Cloverpaw asked the two apprentices.

"No, we came to the last one," Moringpaw replied.

"This is our second Gathering," Ravenpaw said.

"You're lucky. Lionstar thought that we shouldn't have gone to the Gathering being young apprentices," Sandypaw frowned.

"So you're older than us but this is your first Gathering too?" Wildpaw asked. Pinepaw nodded. "Alright!" He sprang up and landed with his tail perked up high.

"Does Cottenclan have any apprentices?" Shinepaw asked Ravenpaw.

"As far as I know of, they have two. Their Featherpaw and Marigoldpaw," Ravenpaw replied.

"They're our age too," Morningpaw said.

"I guess we'll all become warriors together too," Pinepaw joked.

"It seems that way," Morningpaw smiles.

"Are you making friends, Pinepaw?" He looked over and saw Tawnypool standing beside him. "Don't be replacing me now." The tortoiseshell she-cat frowned.

"Just because I'm talking to other apprentices doesn't mean anything," he told her.

"Who is she?" He heard Badgerpaw whisper over to Cloverpaw.

"That is Tawnypool. She just became a warrior and is Pinepaw's future mate," she teased. Pinepaw glared at her. Some of the other apprentices looked weirdly at him.

"So you're mates?" Brackenpaw asked.

"No, not now," Tawnypool reassured them.

"But until Pinepaw becomes a warrior," Sandypaw said.

The Cottenclan cats arrived and the two other apprentices joined the little circle.

They started the Gathering. As Lionstar was getting ready to step

forward, Curlstar stopped him. She looked as if she had something urgent to tell the clans.

"I have found the song of nectar," she stated. All the cats looked shocked. "Mouseshine found the cat and she is here and going to share the dreams she saw of the great storm. Is that alright with the other leaders?" She looked over to them. They all nodded their heads.

A cream tabby she-cat bounced up next to her leader on the Tall Stone.

"I don't know how to word this, but I've had these realistic dreams of this storm and there was this giant cloud that spun. It produced winds that were strong enough to pull the trees out of the ground and into the air," she began.

"How do we know she isn't just dreaming?" The Marshclan deputy growled.

"I promise that Honeysong is the cat," Mouseshine spoke up. "These dreams horrified her. What dreams are going to show all of this? Starclan told us about her and she is important if the clans want to survive this storm."

Honeysong continued, "I was flung into the air too and was whipped around through the sky. I saw many cats also in the sky and running into all the tree branches that were pulled up into the sky as well. I was flying in the sky by just the huge wind from the spinning cloud. I couldn't even go back down to the ground."

"It looks as if we must decide some plan for when this spinning cloud comes," Cheetahstar meowed.

"How are we going to protect our families," A gray she-cat with a long tail from Meadowclan yelled out. "I don't want my family to flung around in the sky and die."

"We must find the cat of the trees," Sunstep meowed. "We will truly be protected once they have been discovered."

"For now, each clan should devise a plan in their own territory

and see if any of their clanmates are the cat of the trees," Flamestar said.

"Shouldn't we come up with something together?" Curlstar asked him.

"All the territories are different. Some things might now work in other parts of the territory."

"If anybody finds the cat in the trees, we'll have an emergency Gathering," Cheetahstar said. All the other leaders nodded their heads.

The rest of the Gathering went on as normal, but all the cats kept talking about the great storm and the spinning cloud. They were all worried about their families.

Pinepaw walked past a Marshclan cream tom who spoke to what seemed like his kits.

"I know you before might now like this, but it will only be temporary. I also have to think about Silentkit and Bumblekit too. We should travel into the Twolegplace for protection from the storm."

Pinepaw couldn't believe what he was hearing. Were cats really thinking about leaving the clans to save themselves from being caught in the storm?

He quickly went to go find Stormwisker so he could leave and head back to his head. He could feel his eyelids drooping, heavy and ready for sleep. Sandypaw and Cloverpaw were right behind him too.

Lionstar gathered all the Morningclan cats and they took off, back on their long journey to the camp, without saying anything to the other leaders.

Chapter 25

[image]

These days the outside weather now matched Ryefeather's mood, gloomy. Ever since the old black medicine cat was found dead, Ryefeather took a turn to the worst. He tried to play an act whenever Wolfshine was around, trying to be happy for the kits, but she would always catch onto the tom.

"Ryefeather, I know you are having a hard time with Blackstep's death, but you have to get over it now," the silver tabby she-cat.

"It is hard," Ryefeather sighed. "I'm all alone now in this den. Blackstep didn't talk much, but I always knew he was right by my side. I miss him."

"I know you do. Everyone does. He was a talented medicine cat. Ryefeather now you have more things to worry about. You're the clan's medicine cat," Wolfshine leaned in a bit closer and whispered in his ear, "*Plus you're going to be a father*."

"I'll try my best." Ryefeather stood up from laying in his moss bed. "Can you stay in here tonight? I don't want to be alone again."

"The clan will question us."

"They already do and I can make up something stupid to allow for you to stay with me. You're alone in the nursery too."

"For tonight, I can."

Now the Wolfshine didn't have warrior duties to do anymore, the two would casually spend time in the medicine cat's den. Wolfshine would always help sort through the herbs or treat easy wounds on cats who came in.

"You two really work well together," Swiftcloud said. "It is a shame Ryefeather is a medicine cat and not a warrior. You would have

lovely kits."

Ryefeather wanted to burst out and share his happiness with everyone else about his and Wolfshine's kits. All the clan knows is that Wolfshine is expecting. They don't know who the real father is. They only suspect it was a rouge or a loner. Iceleap and Hazelflower tried to get her to spill, but Wolfshine only refused multiple times.

"The father doesn't want to reveal himself," she always told anybody who asked.

Ryefeather sat in the entrance of his den. There was a very musty smell to the air outside. He could pick up the smell of rain in the air. He should go collect a few herbs before the rain would happen.

He quickly told Wolfshine that he would be back and padded outside of the camp. He went to his normal spots where the herbs grew. Picking a few stems and leaves, gathering berries and seeds, he quickly made his way back to camp.

When he was almost back, a raindrop fell onto his muzzle. He quickened his pace. The wind started to pick up and ruffled his fur.

Ryefeather entered the camp. He ran into the den now. The rain started to come down more now. He dropped the herbs on the ground, hoping they would dry a little bit.

"We can't stay here," he heard Iceleap's meow.

"I can't just leave, Iceleap. I have to stay here in my clan," Wolfshine's mew rang back.

"Come on, Wolfshine. You're expecting. You need to think about the kits," Hazelflower's voice also joined in.

"No, I'm not leaving."

Ryefeather walked over and saw the three littermates talking amongst one another. Wolfshine obviously looked upset with the two. They both looked concerned for their expecting sister.

"What is happening?" Ryefeather asked.

"Hazelflower and Iceleap are trying to make me leave the clan for a bit. They are worried about the kits. Drizzlefrost and Whitefire are also leaving too."

"Just until this storm is gone. What if you start kitting when it is happening?" Iceleap said.

"No, can't leave my clan. I belong here and I don't want to leave. I will make sure my kits are safe here."

"Alright, if we can't make you, then you must stay. Just know we'll be at the edge of the twolegplace if you ever change your mind," Drizzlefrost added, as she padded in.

"But..."

"We can't force her. She is a warrior and can make her own decisions," Whitefire said.

"We'll see you once this is over," Drizzlefrost came up and touched noses with her daughter.

"I'll miss you, but I can't leave. We'll see each other together again."

Ryefeather watched as the four cats padded out of the den and out of camp. They weren't the only ones who left. Breezepool took here two kits, Morningpaw and Ravenpaw, out away from the clans, and Grasslight had also left the clan previously.

Cheetahstar had allowed the cats to leave if they wished to protect themselves. He will accept them back into the clan after this great storm is all over.

Some other cats from the other clans have also come wandering on Meadowclan's territory going to the twolegplace to save their pelts for what is to come.

"I can't believe some cats are leaving in the middle of this storm. I won't want to get my pelt wet in that rain. Morningclan would be the only ones who would enjoy it," Ryefeather said.

"I know. I just wish my kin would have stayed here. I feel alone

now. I only have you by my side, Ryefeather," Wolfshine said, snuggling up into his neck.

"They will be back. You just have to be patient," he reassured her.

~~~~~~~

Ryefeather watched the rain pour down on the grass outside. More cats had left the following day. Harerunner and Brindlefrost also joined in with the other cats who left to save themselves from the storm.

Ryefeather went to the back of his den and gathered some mousebile to bring over to the elders' den. He hasn't been over there in a bit and thought they might need some ticks removed from their pelts.

He looked outside and took off to the elders' den. He shook his pelt once he made it inside. The two elders lifted their heads to the new cat in the den.

"Ryefeather, it is good to see you," Sparkrise meowed. "How have your days been going?"

"It is much quieter in the den now that Blackstep is gone," he replied.

"I was shocked to see him so sick all of a sudden," Hawkcloud said. "I remember when he was first made into a medicine cat. He was a few moons older than Cheetahstar." Hawkcloud was the father of the Meadowclan leader. "He was so quiet and would always listen to the medicine cat at the time, Fawnmist. He did have a good knowledge of herbs and easily communicated with Starclan."

"Moorpatch was also around their age. He would always come over and ask me why Blackkit was so quiet and didn't want to play at all," Sparkrise joined in.

"He was a great mentor," Ryefeather said, then plucking a tick off of the brown tom's pelt.

"It is a shame he died so young though."
~~~~~~~

"I wonder what killed him?" Hawkcloud questioned.

"He was very sick beforehand. He left while I wasn't there. I should have been there to stop him," Ryefeather meowed.

"It isn't your fault. No cat could have known he would die if he just walked off," Sparkrise said, placing her tail on his back to comfort that grieving tom.

"You'll be a great medicine cat, Ryefeather. You already are now," Hawkcloud also comforted him.

"Thank you," he murmured as he finished up with the last tick. He waved goodbye with his tail and sprinted off back to the medicine cat's den.

Wolfshine was asleep already. Her pelt gently rose and fell to her breathing rate. He sat down and watched her. His heartbeat quickened at the sight of his beautiful mate. He glanced at the start of her belly beginning to swell. Will the clan think that the kits are mine? Wolfshine and I have been close to each other ever since we were kits. Would they think we're just friends or mates?

He shook his head to get rid of the thoughts. He promised Wolfshine that he would be happy.

He wanted to curl up next to her, but he needed to put the other herbs away that he collected earlier. He gently picked them up and carried them to the back. He sorted each one in the same slots that Blackstep always had done.

Looking at each spot reminded him of the black tom. He remembered arguing about why the comfrey wasn't next to the feverfew and why the watermint was there instead.

"I like it like that," Blackstep always told him.

"I bet it was because Fawnmist must have put them like that. It is what I'm doing now. He must have missed his mentor as well."

As he finished sorting, he felt a breeze pass through his fur. He looked outside. His eyes widened. Water started to pool into the

den. The camp was beginning to fill with water. It was about to flood.

Chapter 26

[image]

It was raining so much. Tinyslip9 could nearly see in front of her own paws. After the Gathering, Frogsplash convinced her that they should seek shelter away from the clans.

"I've lost my mate and I can't lose you too. We have to go, Tinyslip," she could see the despair trapped in his eyes.

"Alright, I'll go," Tinyslip agreed.

"What about me?" Brackenpaw stares at his mentor. "You can't leave!"

"It isn't safe here, Brackenpaw. I must leave but I'll be back before you know it."

"Wait, Tinyslip," another voice called out to her. The gray and white she-cat turned to see Fernstep padding over to her. "Please take Brackenpaw. I want him safe too. I must stay here with Flamestar and my unborn kits. You'll protect him, right?"

"I promise there won't be a scratch on him."

That was how they ended up here. As they were on their way to the Twoleg place, the rain began to pour down. The water was now up to Tinyslip's feet.

"This must be what Morningclan feels like," Frogsplah grumbled.

"We're not too far now," she reassured him.

"Will we meet kittypets there?" Brackenpaw asked.

"We might run into a few of them."

As they neared the Twolegplace, they were better sheltered from the rain. They found a hole carved out in an abandoned Twoleg

nest and curled up inside to dry off.

"If it wasn't raining, we could've gone out to hunt, but they are also curled up in their own nests," she sighed.

"We'll be fine for now. We must hope it will clear up soon and give us time to hunt. A little water couldn't hurt us if we need to go out while it is raining," Frogsplash said. He laid down near the corner of the Twoleg nest.

"The water was at our feet," Tinyslip told him. "I don't think it will go away anytime soon. I'll go out now and see if there is anything."

"Tinyslip, you can't. What if you get lost?" Her father's head sprung up.

"I won't take long. I promise I'll be back soon."

"Just see if the rain will hold for a little bit longer." She sighed but agreed. She padded over to join him and Brackenpaw stood near the entrance, looking out at the pouring rain.

"Has it ever rained this much?"

"Not as long as I've been alive," Frogsplash meowed. "Maybe the elders would have known something. The stories get passed down from generation to generation."

"I wonder if other clans cats are here too?" Tinyslip wondered.

"I know we aren't the first ones to leave. We could also look around when the rain stops for a little bit."

With that, the three of them curled up together and rested their heads on their paws. They finally could rest from the long journey through the rain. Their eyelids grew heavy as they soon slipped off to dreamland.

~~~~~~~

Frogsplash was right, the rain did end up lightening up a little
~~~~~~~

bit. Tinyslip left the den. The other two stayed back to keep their spot safe while she hunted.

Being near the Twolegplace made it harder to find prey. Their scents were around, but whenever she saw them, they were always sitting in a tree.

She finally found a blackbird nibbling at the ground. She crouched down getting ready to pounce. She slowly crept forward making sure that the bird wouldn't hear her. She stopped to get ready to jump, but a noise sounded in the bushes. The blackbird turned its head and flew away.

A slender gray and blue she-cat padded out. She walked right over to her.

"That was my prey. You were trying to disrupt me," she snapped.

"I'm sorry kittypet but not every one of us has a Twoleg to take care of us," Tinyslip fought back.

"I found it first."

"Well, you wouldn't have caught it anyway since you're the one who scared it off."

"Say one more word and I'll claw your fur off." Her fur sparked up as she readied herself to fight.

"Sage, are you really starting fights again. Our housefolks are scared whenever you throw yourself at another cat," a really plump yellow she-cat padded over. Tinyslip was surprised she could walk. The she-cat's legs look so short due to the weight of the female.

"Go off and mind your own business," Sage hissed at her.

"I'm sorry about her. She has always had a bit of a temper. My name is Snickers."

Snickers? that is a weird name, she thought.

"I'll just be going then," Tinyslip meows before trying to walk

away. Snickers stopped her.

"You look hungry. Our housefolk leave some kibble out for the stray cats around here. I'm sure Misty won't mind sharing a few scraps."

"I'm a warrior. I don't eat kittypet food."

"A few bites won't kill you." *Sure they won't. Nobody wants to eat rabbit droppings.*

"Why are you so keen on helping strange cats. Go back and munch on your kibble while I stay out here hunting for myself," Sage hissed at the tabby she-cat.

"I really must be going. I have two clanmates waiting for me."

"Then we can go and get them together, right Sage?" She looks over at the gray she-cat.

"No, I don't trust this cat."

"We don't need your food. I'm out hunting right now before the rain starts again," Tinyslip reassured them.

"More reason to move quickly. Come on and lead the way," Snickers takes off in a random direction.

"It is this way," Tinyslip stops her and takes the lead back to the abandoned Twoleg nest.

They came up to the broken down nest. She peaks her head inside and Brackenpaw comes running over to her.

"Did you find anything?" She shakes her head no. "I'm starving. I want some prey."

"That's why we're here," Snickers pops up.

"No, it is why you're here. I was forced to come to make sure you can walk back home," Sage snickers.

"Why did you bring kittypets here," her father questioned.

"I know it doesn't sound reasonable, but they said we could have some of their food. It will fill us up until I can find some prey," Tinyslip told him. He seemed hesitant, but understood their situation and agreed to follow them back.

"I've always wondered what kittypet food tastes like," Brackenpaw says.

"It is so tasty. You can't even get enough of it," Snickers meows.

"You probably sleep next to your food bowl," Sage says. "All you have on your mind is food. When am I going to receive my next food so I can eat it all in one bite."

"You said there is another cat that eats there," Tinyslip says, not paying attention to Sage.

"Yeah, Misty eats the food every once in a while. She is a bit older than us but doesn't mind stopping and talking for a little bit. She is the only one who puts Sage in her place."

"That isn't true!"

"What about that one time you almost attacked her and she shot you that side eye and you immediately back away from her."

"You're making up stories," Sage turns her head. "Look we're here now."

They came up to the house. Snickers led them to the back and on a piece of wood laid a bowl filled with food. Brackenpaw was the first to dig into it. Tinyslip and Frogsplash were a bit hesitant to eat. When they did, they only took a few bites to satisfy their stomachs.

"Who do we have here?" A fluffy gray she-cat comes over. "Showing another batch of cats the kibble?"

"These cats are clan cats. They needed some food before the rain came back," Snickers informed her.

"What are you doing out here? I've never since clan cats come this far into the Twolegplace. I only meet them on their borders when I do some traveling around."

"There is a great storm that is coming, so we're here to keep ourselves safe," Brackenpaw jumps in.

"Have you seen any other clan cats around here?" Frogsplash asks, speaking for one of the first times.

"I've seen a few, but they've made sure to keep to the outskirts of the Twolegplace."

"Could you show us them? It would be best if all of us stayed with one another."

"Of course. I'll take you there now," Misty flicks her tail for them to follow.

"I want to come too," Sage steps forward. "I want to see how the clans live. I always wanted to leave this house. Sometimes the housefolk's children get a bit too touchy."

Misty took them through all the nests of the Twolegs as she led them to the land on the side of the Twolegplace. Tinyslip could pick up a few scents of some cats, but couldn't recognize them very well.

"This is where I met them. Some were a bit hostile, but they might be more friendly since you're also from a clan."

Tinyslip walked over and peeked around. Cats then began to pop up and smile, seeing some more clan cats here to join them.

"We have some more Marshclan cats," a gray she-cat popped out. Tinyslip recognized her as Drizzlefrost from Meadowclan.

"Welcome to our makeshift clan," Yellowflight smiled at her. The tom had left with Bumblekit and Silentkit as soon as the news of the storm came out. Creamspot and Maplepelt also followed their father here. "It is nice to see familiar faces again."

"It sounds like you missed us too much," Frogsplash jokes.

Tinyslip looks around and see so many of the clan cats here. There were some from each clan. Drizzlefrost, Whitefire, Hazelflower, Iceleap, Harerunner, Morningpaw, Ravenpaw, Breezepool, Brindlefrost, and Grasslight from Meadowclan. Pouncemist, Snowcloud, Spiderspot, and Amberwish from Cottenclan. Lilywhisker, Applekit, Dustkit, Birchclaw, Ottersplash from Morningclan.

"We aren't the only ones anymore. I told you Maplepelt that I was sure some cats would follow us," the yellow tom looked down to his elder kit.

"Being here isn't too bad. I got to see my siblings from a different clan after a while," Brindlefrost meowed. She rubbed noses to Ottersplash and Birchclaw.

"With all these cats, we could form a clan of our own," Pouncemist says.

Tinyslip smiled at all the cats. The three quickly settled in with all the other clan cats. Sage also stayed with them there, not wanting to go back to the Twoleg nest. Misty needed to go back to her own business and left soon after.

I guess this is how we'll be living for the time being.

Chapter 27

[image]

Honeysong padded into camp carrying a sparrow. *At least I could find something in this terrible weather.* She walked over and gave it to Mouseshine.

"This is a nice sparrow, Honeysong. I can see you're getting back on your paws," the she-cat meowed.

Honeysong was finally able to continue her warrior duties. It had been forever since she remembered going out into the forest to track prey. She felt better being able to breathe in all the forest scents.

Although things with Dustywing aren't good. Ever since she declined his confession, he had been avoiding her. He was always moping around camp with his tail dragging behind him. Honeysong felt bad for him.

"I hope the storm won't be around for too long. All my herbs are going to drown in this weather," Mouseshine complained.

"Can't agree to you more," Honeysong smiled.

The cream she-cat stepped out of the den and headed to the cover of the warriors' den. She plopped down and began to groom her fur to get all the mud that stuck to her pelt.

Most of the other warriors also sat in their nests either sleeping or grooming their fur from being out earlier. Curlstar wanted to have some warriors try to hunt in the rain in order to feed the kits, queens, and elders. Sometimes the warriors would be going to bed on empty stomachs.

"I don't know how long I can take it," Juniperslash mumbled. "I haven't had a decent meal in days. Curlstar makes sure that the queens, kits, and elders are fed but us warriors are getting the tail

bits that they didn't want."

"It is important that they are fed. It is a part of the Warrior Code. At least we get to eat something. Soon this will be over and we'll go back to being normal," Poppymist snapped at the black tom. Juniperslash rolled his eyes and looked away from the she-cat.

Honeysong didn't want to deal with the warriors arguing, so she laid her head down on her paws and closed her eyes. It was hard to sleep from all the voices in the den, but eventually, sleep took her away.

~~~~~~~

"Honeysong, wake up! We have to move to cover," Dustywing's terrified voice woke the cream tabby she-cat from her sleep. She rose to her paws.

Outside was pouring down harder than it has ever. She widened her eyes at the wind blowing around fiercely. *It is happening. Just like in the visions I had. The day has come,* she thought to herself.

Dustywing pushed her out of the den and led her to where Curlstar was leading the cats out of camp to move farther down to more sheltered trees.

Heatherheart slides in next to Honeysong. She placed her tail on her back, knowing that Honeysong was panicking. She was the only cat to know what this storm would be like.

Everyday Honeysong would be terrified to leave camp. Her fur would always be on end and her mind would continue to wander off. Some of her clanmates would send her back seeing that she wasn't going to try to bring prey back to camp.

"We'll get through this. We're a clan and that is all that matters," Heatherheart told her.

They reached the area where they would stay for the night. Trees were surrounding all around them and were quite tall for the normal tree around here.
~~~~~~~

Honeysong was breathing hard and kept whispering to herself, *"This isn't going to work. The wind can move the trees. We're not safe at all."*

The whole clan was soaked down to the bone. Squirrelskip tried to soothe her crying kits as they could pick up the fear from all the cats around them.

"Don't worry. Everything will be alright," her soft voice allowed them to stop mewling, but they still stayed close to her and watched the area with wide eyes.

"Curlstar we must go and look for her," Poppymist cried to the light brown she-cat. "Amberwish never came back to camp before we left. She doesn't know where we are."

"I know you care deeply about your kit, but I can't risk any warriors' lives to save her. I'm sure she has found shelter from the rain and wind," Curlstar said in a calm manner.

Poppymist's mate, Timberfang, came over to calm her down. Honeysong could see that the tom was also panicking from his kit's disappearance. They went over to their two other kits Marigoldpaw and Featherpaw. Poppymist licked the top of their heads to comfort them.

All of the cats were freaking out. None of them knew what to expect with this storm.

The winds were starting to pick up. The leaves in the trees above them were falling all around them. The branches were starting to look bare. The area was starting to become unsafe as the trees weren't protecting them.

"Curlstar, I suggest that we head towards the base of mountains. We might find a cave to stay in for the night," Heatherheart told the leader. Curlstar thought for a second then nodded her head. She called out for everyone to prepare to move again.

She led them through the trees once again. The padded over piles of leaves that fell from the branches.

The base of the mountains came into sight. Honeysong felt a little

bit of relief seeing the rocky hills. Dustywing fur brushed against her. She looked up at the black tom. She was grateful he hadn't left her side since the beginning. He's seen her waking up in the middle of the night from the nightmares of the storm. He probably also can pick up her fear.

"I want a couple of warriors to scout around the rocks and look for a place we can stay in," Curlstar called out. Pebblewing and Grayspot were set off to patrol the area.

The rest of the clan just waited underneath the trees until they would come back. It wasn't long before Pebblewing appeared and led them to a groove in the rocks that allowed some shelter for the clan.

"Queens, kits, and elders must enter first and will stay in the back of the cave. Mouseshine can also check if any cat was injured from the journey," Curlstar mew rang out.

Squrrielskip nosed her three kits inside the cave as Larkfeather and Fuzzywhisker followed in after them.

The cave wasn't too sheltered in the front, but deeper into it wasn't covered in water. Some of the clan cats could be protected from the winds, but the cave wasn't that big. Some cats had to stay out in the wind. Curlstar and Heatherheart were two of those cats, wanting to make sure the clan was taken care of first.

"Dustywing," Honeysong said to the tom. He glanced down at the cream tabby she-cat. "*Please don't leave me.*"

Dustywing was surprised by the statement. His eyes widened as he looked at her. His expression softened when he responded, "Don't worry. I'll always be by your side."

The cave was getting loud. All the cats communicating with one another plus the wind and rain outside made it hard to hear the cat next to you. It was already past sunhigh and the cats were starving.

"We must send out a patrol with just a few cats. We can't just go hungry," Heatherheart tried to convince the leader.

"I know that, but I don't want anything happening to the cats that are out. What if they die without their clan next to them," there was concern in the leader's voice.

"We'll die of starvation then," Grayspot murmured.

Curlstar thought for a second before letting out a sigh. "We can't go hungry. A few cats will be sent out to find some kind of prey. Look in cracks that they would be sheltering from the rain."

Three cats were spent out on the patrol, Mintspark, Juniperslash, and Dustywing. Honeysong pressed her nose into the tom's fur before he left. He made a promise to return unharmed.

Now Honeysong stood near the entrance of the cave, keeping a lookout for the patrol. She was worried that Dustywing would be swept away from the wind or a tree would come crashing down and trapping him somewhere.

He must stay alive! She thought.

The moon was starting to go down and the winds were still strong, maybe even stronger than before. The patrol hadn't returned yet and Honeysong was freaking out. She wouldn't leave from the cave entrance hoping that the three would return safely.

Just then, out of the corner of her eyes, Dustywing popped out. A scrawny mouse hung in his jaw. Juniperslash and Mintspark also came behind him. Each carrying a piece of prey too.

"They've returned," Honeysong called out to the clan. The cats started rejoicing in their return.

Dustywing came running over to Honeysong. He dropped the mouse and nuzzled the she-cat. She returned the affection.

Mintspark also ran off to her family who waited at the entrance. Juniperslash just slowly made his way towards the cave.

Then the strongest wind blew through the forest. Juniperslash opened his mouth and dropped the bird he carried as the wind swept the tom off his feet. He flew through the air and out of sight.

Chapter 28

[image]

Pinepaw peered out of the dip in the hollow that Morningclan had been sheltering from the storm outside. Lionstar, Shimmersky and Sunstep were talking with the senior warriors. They were discussing the future plans for the clan since the camp was flooded from the water.

"We must find the cat of the trees," Redripple meowed. "We're never going to be safe until we find that cat."

"How are we going to do that? We're all curled up in here waiting for this rain to pass. Everyone has hardly eaten anything from all the warriors worried about being blown away from the winds," Sunstep said.

Pinepaw turned away from the group of cats. He padded back over to where Sandypaw and Cloverpaw were staying.

"Where were you?" Cloverpaw asked.

"I was spying on the meeting. They're arguing about the cat of the trees," Pinepaw told them.

"Well, off topic, but Tawnypool was looking for you. She left right when you got here," Sandypaw told him. Pinepaw flicked his ear and dashed off to find the tortoiseshell she-cat.

He quickly found her going over to the warrior's area. "Tawnypool!" He called out to her. She whipped her head over to see him and stopped. "I heard you were looking for me. Sandypaw and Cloverpaw said you stopped by."

"Yeah, I was wondering if you wanted to go hunting. I already checked with Stormwhisker too. The rain and wind have lightened up for now."

"Alright. Let's go."

The two padded out of the hollow and headed out to the water. It was flooded over and the hollow is the space that Morningclan moves to when the camp floods. It is high uphill so it would take a lot of water to reach the hollow.

"There really isn't much out here," Tawnypool sighed to herself as she glanced down at the water beneath her. "Maybe we could swim out a little to see if any fish are farther downstream."

Pinepaw dipped his paws into the cold water before gradually moving into the water. He began to move his paws back and forth to keep his head above the surface. He swam out and scouted around the area and dunked underneath to see if anything was under.

"I think I felt something over here," Pinepaw told Tawnypool.

They both dipped underneath the water and found a school of fish swimming next to each other. Excitedly, once they swam up for air, they immediately dove right back into the water and tried to snaggle a couple more fish.

Pinepaw crushed a couple bodies of the slippery things before coming back up and moving over to the shore. He dropped them on the ground and made sure that none of them were alive. Tawnypool came up next to him and dropped three more fish next to his.

"I think you found the perfect spot, Pinepaw," the she-cat praised.

They both leapt back into the water and caught a couple more fish before noticing the winds picking up again. They gathered the prey and made their way off back to the hollow.

The wind brushed through Pinepaw's pelt. He was now having a hard time walking through the strong winds. The trees above them shook from the fierce winds.

"Let's hurry back," Tawnypool meowed. Pinepaw nodded his head and followed her through the territory.

A crack was heard above them. Pinepaw shot his head up to see where the noise was from. His eyes grew big and his jaws dropped open, making all the fish fall from his mouth. A branch was coming, crashing down right towards him. He was too scared to move and before he realized the situation, the branch fell right on him and his vision went black.

~~~~~~~~

Dustpaw rose to his paws and shook the leaves from his pelt. He was standing in the trainin*g area. I must be back in the ancestors' world,* he thought to himself.

"Dustpaw, there you are," Rainpaw trotted over to him. Dewsnow is looking for you again." The apprenticed looked up and down his pelt. "I can tell that you've been sleeping again. You're not going to become a warrior at this point." Rainpaw came forwards and began licking through all the matted areas of his fur.

"We have to go back to camp, Mackerelstar has received a message from Starclan. He is going to share it with the clan right now." She went around the back and used her head to push him onto his paws. "Let's go."

They made their way back to camp and Dewsnow was standing there with scowled a expression on her face.

"There you are. I'm beginning to think that I'll always be a mentor now," she hissed at him. "Hurry, Mackerelstar has already called the meeting."

Dustpaw and Rainpaw went over and sat in the back of the group of cats as their leader stood over them. His dark brown fur blended in with the dark haze from the gray clouds above.

"Last night I had a vision from Starclan. They warned me about an upcoming danger to the clans. A giant cloud will be on the ground and spinning very fast that the winds become so strong that it can carry trees in the air."

This is exactly like Honeysong's dream. He paused and remembered
~~~~~~~~

the prophecy that the medicine cats shared at the gathering. *A cat of the trees... I must be that cat. A pine is a type of a tree. That must mean I'm going to find a way to help all the clans survive!*

"What kind of mousebrain dream was that?" A warrior named Grayfur said. "No wind could pull a tree out from the ground."

"What I'm telling you is true. All the leaders and medicine cat's have had the same dream. This is a message from Starclan."

"I guess all leaders and medicine cats are going crazy then," Troutsplash said in a low voice over to Grayfur. The gray tom laughed and nodded.

"I believe him," Dustpaw stood up. All the cats turned around and looked at him. He felt embarrassed for speaking up now.

"What does a bad excuse for an apprentice have to say then," Grayfur snarled. "Did you also have the same dream?"

"Mackerelstar wouldn't lie. He was chosen by Starclan to lead us then we must trust him." His mother Mistpool said from the other side of the group. Some of the other cats whispered to one another and began to agree with the gray tabby she-cat's words.

"What do we do then?" Icefern asked.

"I can answer this," Mapleberry, the medicine cat, stood up from her den. "Our own ancestors have been through this storm as well. In order to protect them, they've made a hideout underneath the ground in a cave. There are also separate tunnels that led into burrows and underground rivers to keep us fed."

"So you mean that cats dug into the ground to protect us from this storm?" Ravenheart asked. Mapleberry nodded.

"Where are these tunnels then?" A queen, Shineleaf asked.

"The entrance isn't far at all. It is right behind the leader's den. It is covered to make sure no other cats could find it if we were to go down there."

The cats started to whisper to one another again as they discussed this new thing that none of them knew about.

"This is so cool! I can't wait to explore those tunnels," Rainpaw said. "Maybe I could find something cool down there and receive my warrior name." She looked over at her littermate. "You could come too and we can receive it together."

"I don't know about that. We don't know the tunnels well enough," Dustpaw said, nervously.

Mackerelstar silenced the camp by raising his tail. "I'll have a group of cats to go down into the tunnels and report back again if they see anything there."

"I'll gather up the patrol then," Berryfang dipped his head towards the leader. "Alright, I will lead the patrol and Brackenfeather, Darkclaw, Whitewing, Dewsnow, and Dustpaw will all join me. We head down there now."

Dustpaw was shocked to hear his name. Rainpaw was also shocked and a little saddened that she couldn't go with them.

"I'll be back soon," he told her.

He padded off and joined the other cats. Berryfang moved the cover of the entrance. A dark hole was there that led deep down into the ground. The deputy was the first to go in. Each cat began to follow in after him.

"Go on in Dustpaw. I'll have your back," Darkclaw meowed to his kit. He felt relief knowing that his father would be right behind him. Dustpaw slipped down into the tunnel after his mentor and used his whiskers to lead the way through the dark space.

He could feel the area growing bigger the deeper he got until his whiskers weren't brushing against the dirt walls.

"We're here," Berryfang said.

Pinepaw felt around the cave. There were some old pieces of moss that laids near the edges of the cave. *Cats have definitely been*

down here before. He poked around the walls until there was another opening that led somewhere else.

"I think I've found where the other tunnels are," he told the others.

He could hear them shifting around trying to find the apprentice. Eventually, Brackenfeather popped us next to him and went into the tunnels.

"I think he is right. I can hear the underground river," the tom said.

"We'll go a little farther and then go back up to report to Mackerelstar," Berryfang said.

They journeyed around the tunnels a little bit longer before going out back into the fresh air. Rainpaw was waiting right in the clearing to hear about her littermate's adventure.

"Was it cool?" She bounced over to him.

"I could hardly see a thing, but everything Mapleberry said was actually down there," he told her.

"I can't wait to see for myself once I get to go down there. You'll show me around, right?"

"Yeah, of course."

Rainpaw bounced around some more before Yellowfang sent them back into the apprentices' den to sleep for the night.

Dustpaw curled up in the moss bed and closed his eyes, hoping to be back in the future with Tawnypool next to his side.

~~~~~~~

Pinepaw opened his eyes and looked around at the area around him. He felt relief seeing the pretty tortoiseshell she-cat sitting right next to him.
~~~~~~~

"Pinepaw! Are you alright? Did you get hurt?" She began bombarding him with questions.

He completely dodged them and quickly blurted out to where Sunstep could also hear him, "I know how we can stay safe from the storm!"

Chapter 29

[image]

Tinyslip sat glancing out at the area surrounding her. Brackenpaw was pouncing on leaves behind her. Frogsplash was talking to Yellowflight from Marshclan.

"When will this rain go away?" Ravenpaw whined. "I'm tired of sitting in here doing nothing."

"Yeah, I want to be training right now," Morningpaw agreed.

"Why don't we do some training here then," Drizzlefrost said. "We won't be able to do too complicated things with the limited amount of space."

"But my mentor isn't here," Ravenpaw meowed.

"Well, Drizzlefrost and I can help you to. Mentors all help each other out," Tinyslip told the apprentice.

They lined up the three apprentices and the two she-cats demonstrated a battle move for them to practice. Before they could get through with the whole move, Applekit and Dustkit from Morningclan, came running over to the group.

"We want to learn battle moves too. We're almost apprentices," Applekit mewed.

"Yeah, we need to be prepared for any kittypets," Dustkit agreed.

"You're still too young," Drizzlefrost told them. "These moves no recently made apprentice would learn. Only experienced ones will learn moves like this."

Even though there are cats from all the four clans, they each treat each other like they were all in the same clan. They all look out for each of the kits just like any cat would in the camp. It was a little awkward meeting all these new cats, but Tinyslip could say

that all these cats were great and would consider all of them friends now.

Lilywhisker came over there and gathered up her kits. "Sorry if they were bothering. They've been very ornery since their apprentice ceremony is coming up."

"It is fine. All kits are like that," Tinyslip reassured.

They went back and focused on training the three apprentices. Tinyslip and Drizzlefrost performed the same move once again as the apprentices watched and analyzed their movements. They took note of how to execute it.

"Now you try."

Brackenpaw and Morningpaw were first. They tried to perform the battle move, but Brackenpaw tripped over his paws causing him to fall on the ground. Ravenpaw couldn't hold back his laugh and Brackenpaw ran over and jumped on top of the other apprentice.

Tinyslip ran over to pull him off by his scruff. She dragged him back and started to give him a big scolding, "You don't attack any of the other cats here, Brackenpaw."

"But he..."

"I don't care. Just brush it off and continue practicing," Tinyslip waved her tail back over to Morningpaw.

Brackenpaw marched over there with a sour expression but didn't complain. He tried the move over again. This time, he landed it but was a little messy giving a good attack on the Meadowclan apprentice.

"Why don't Ravenpaw give it a try," Drizzlefrost suggested. Tinyslip nodded and the tom came forward. He waited until the right moment and showed off the move perfectly. He landed perfectly back on the ground. He shows a little smirk over towards Brackenpaw. The apprentice folded his ears down in embarrassment.

"It is alright. Remember these cats are more trained than you are anyway. They've been doing this longer."

"That was excellent, Ravenpaw. You're shaping into a very nice fighter," Drizzlefrost praised. "Windbreeze must have taught you very well. Why don't we have Morningpaw try now."

The white and gray she-cat walked over to get ready to do the move. She leaped towards Ravenpaw. Morningpaw also showcases it perfectly.

"That was a piece of cake," She said after landing. She sat down for a second and licked her paws and rubbed her head.

As they were doing battle practice, Sage came over to them. The blue gray she-cat hasn't left back to her home yet. She preferred to learn all these cool things from the clan cats. Snickers came by one time to tell Sage that she should come back home and that their housefolks are very worried about her.

"All they ever did was torture me. I couldn't get a break from them," she had told the tabby.

At first, Sage just sat off to the side. She watched the two mentors show off the moves to the apprentices.

"Hey, do you mind if I join in too?" she asked.

"Sure, Brackenpaw can have you as his partner," Tinyslip said. She nodded and went over to join the light brown tom.

They would practice all of their new moves together. Brackenpaw was a little hesitant to do them with Sage since the she-cat was twice his age. He soon grew to like her. Sage didn't criticize him like the other two apprentices did.

"You're doing great, Brackenpaw!" She would always encourage.

After battle practice, Tinyslip went over to join her father. Brindlefrost and Spiderspot also joined the pair.

"How are Bumblekit and Silentkit doing?" Tinyslip asked when

we laid down next to Frogsplash.

"They seemed to be doing fine. I've been trying to find things to hunt out in the weather, but bringing things back is all so hard since they're also trying to keep dry from all this rain," Yellowflight said.

Ottersplash seemed to be passing by at just the right time. She stopped and walked over to the group.

"I know that really only Morningclan likes to fish, but maybe eating some when there isn't anything wouldn't be so bad. Would you like for me and Birchclaw to go and see if any of the fish are swimming?"

"I don't want to burden you."

"Hey, we must make sure they are fed. We won't mind making sure that the kits are all well fed."

"Thank you, Ottersplash. I really appreciate your help." The yellow tom dipped his head to her.

"Hey, I can go and help too," Brindlefrost meowed, jumping up on her paws. "I know how to fish. I grew up in Morningclan. I'll bring back extra for any other hungry cat."

Brindlefrost was a Meadowclan cat but was born to Dapplefoot and Fernshadow of Morningclan. She was trained in her birth clan until just before becoming a warrior, she realized that she wasn't liking staying in Morningclan. Getting wet every day wasn't her thing. She liked having the wind blow into her pelt. She told her parents and littermates that she was going to travel to Meadowclan to see if they would accept her as a new cat. Luckily they were very welcoming to the new cat and she fit in perfectly in her new clan.

The rain in the twolegplace had hardly ever gone away, but with the help of the few Morningclan cats, they were able to eat fish from a nearby stream. They were thankful for them to go out and hunt in the pouring rain to make sure that all the cats were fed.

Tinyslip and the other Marshclan cats would also sometimes go

and bring back any frogs and toads. None of the other clan cats were too happy to be eating frogs and toads, but they preferred not to starve before going to sleep.

Sage made her way over to the group. She settled in next to Tinyslip. The blue gray she-cat seemed to be growing interested in her. Normally, Sage would be hanging around Tinyslip.

This time it seemed like she needed to talk to her about something. Sage looked like she was contemplating if she actually wanted to ask her.

"Is there something you need?" Tinyslip asked, seeing the she-cat's actions.

"I... um..."

"It's alright. I won't judge you."

"Well, I just wanted to ask... you know that you are clan cats, and..."

"Are you asking if I can teach you something?" Tinyslip cocked her head to the side.

"No, I wanted to ask if when you go back to your clans if I could join you. I've been thinking about it for a long time now and I don't think life as a kittypet suits me. I much rather be out in the wild hunting for prey instead of waiting for my housefolk to bring me my next meal."

Tinyslip was surprised at the question. Well, she kind of expected it since the she-cat hasn't gone back to her housefolks. Sage seemed to be enjoying it around all these cats.

"Are you sure? It isn't very easy."

"I've been thinking about it ever since I met you guys. I promise this is what I want."

"Well, I can take you back. The decision isn't mine to make. Our leader, Flamestar, will have to accept you, but I can help convince

him. He really seems fond of me since he chose me as Brakcenpaw's mentor."

"Is Brackenpaw his son?"

She nodded. "Right now, it is his one living kit. His mate, Fernstep, is expecting more right now."

"Well, I guess I'll just have to wait until the storm is over. There is one thing I want to do before we leave."

"What is it?"

"I must say goodbye to Snickers and Misty before I go. I know that we aren't very friendly towards one another, but I just feel like it is the right thing to do."

"Alright, I think we can squeeze in a quick visit."

Chapter 30

[image]

Honeysong sat on the side of the cave. Ever since Juniperslash was blown away in the wind, Curlstar has been taking more caution against the storm. They were even pushed together more closely so the cats at the cave entrance could be better protected.

"Curlstar, we can't do this," Grayspot told the leader. "All of us are terrified and aren't eating hardly anything. Larkfeather has already died from hunger."

The elder, Larkfeather, had just died earlier that morning. Mouseshine told everyone that the she-cat must have died from hunger. There weren't any other causes that would have happened to the old brown and black she-cat.

"Would you just rather me send out warriors to be blown away in the winds?" Curlstar hissed at the senior warrior. "I have all my clanmates to look after. I would rather them die here with their clan than away in the cold winds."

"This cave is too small. We can't stay here much longer."

"Uh... Curlstar," Heatherheart stepped over to the bickering cats. "I would like to go out and find a new place to stay. I don't want to risk any more clanmates dying."

"No, you can't go and nobody will. We're staying here," Curlstar lashed out her tail.

"Please, having a better place that every cat would be happy with wouldn't make things a little bit easier. I would stay out long and if the winds get too strong, then I'll take cover underneath something. Just let me fulfill my duty as a deputy."

Curlstar sat there and thought for a while. Heatherhear was always ready to risk her life for her clanmates. It was what made

the she-cat such a great deputy.

"Alright, you may go. Please be back before moonrise."

Heatherheart dipped her head and was just about to go out. Honeysong came running over to the group, stopping her in her path.

"I want to go too," Honeysong said. "I already know how the storm is going to be. I should help Heatherheart through the winds."

"No, I can't let another warrior go," Curlstar said.

"I can't allow you to go either," Dustywing came over. He rested his tail on her back.

"I must go. I've seen the storm way before any other cat."

"It would be a higher chance of us making it back, Curlstar," Heatherheart said.

"I don't want to say it, but I have no choice. Honeysong may go."

Honeysong bounced around on her feet. Dustywing wasn't happy with the decision but didn't want to argue with the leader's word. He just licked the top of her head and asked her to make sure that she'll return in one piece.

"I promise," Honeysong agreed.

The two she-cats carefully crept out of the cave. They made sure to stay along the sides of larger objects, like trees or rocks. Cottenclan hasn't really explored much in the base of the mountains. They weren't too keen on walking all over the rocks and scratching the bottom of their paws.

"It has felt forever since we've done something like just the two of us," Heatherheart meowed.

"It wasn't too long ago that I was still an apprentice," Honeysong said. "I guess our duties just don't always line up together anymore."

"I'm glad you got to come along. Honestly, I'm quite scared of being blown away by these winds. I guess if I were to, I'll see Larkfeather again."

Larkfeather was actually Heatherheart's mother. Her father, Fuzzywhisker, has been having a hard time all day with the loss of his mate. Heatherheart hasn't really shown her feelings over the loss of her mother. Now, Honeysong could see the grief that laid in the she-cat's eyes.

"It is a shame that Larkfeather couldn't live a little longer."

They continued down through the forest, searching for any kind of opening that would lead to something.

"Do you think that this kind of storm has happened to our ancestors?" Heatherheart wondered.

"I don't think so. I believe the elders would have passed down their stories of how the clans acted in those moments," Honeysong replied. "We would have already known what to do in this situation."

"I guess you could be right."

The rain and winds bashed through their pelts. It was hard to keep all four paws planted on the ground. Honeysong had kept her claws dug as far as she could go in the wet ground beneath her. She was also scared about the winds carrying her away just like what had happened in her visions.

"Let's hope that there is something nearby. It would be hard moving the clan through all this wind and having the kits and apprentices flying away since they're so small," Heatherheart worried.

"Let's hope Starclan is protecting all the clans at this moment."

The two she-cats desperately searched for a new place. There wasn't much along the rocks. They tried to look closer in the crevices in the mountains, but they were too small for the cats to fit

into.

"Maybe Curlstar was right," Heatherheart sighed. "We shouldn't have done this. There isn't anything big enough for the clan to stay into."

"Hey," Honeysong stopped. Heatherheart stopped alongside the younger warrior. Her head was cocked to the side out of curiosity about what the tabby was going to say. "Remember when you said about it our ancestors would have a storm like this?" Heatherheart only nodded. "Maybe there would be something close to camp if they did have something. Like a shelter to hide from the clouds."

"Your right," Heatherheart's face lit up.

They changed direction and headed towards the camp. Honeysong pushed her way through all the bushes and leaves that were blowing all around her. Some would come and hit her right on the face. She would try to shake it off until the wind would catch hold of it again and fly away.

The two she-cats made it to the camp's entrance. They broke apart and began searching for any kind of things where the ancestors would have gone in a situation like this.

"I can't find anything," Honeysong sighed. "Maybe I was wrong."

"We can't give up just yet. We need to think of a spot that would be hard to find and be very protected," Heatherheart meowed.

They spit off again. Honeysong checked in and out of the dens trying to find any trace of something.

It needs to be a very protected area. *What spot in camp is the most protected*? she thought to herself. Her eyes glanced around at the camp around her.

She stopped at one particular den. It was definitely shaped differently from the others. I must look around the nursery.

Honeysong slowly made her way over to the den. She checked inside first. She moved all the wet leaves that piled up inside. There

wasn't anything. She then made her way around the back.

Her paw hit something different. It wasn't like the area surrounding it. She glazed her paw over and saw a hole peeking out. She moved the object and the hole grew bigger. She popped her head inside and saw the tunnels intertwining down in the dirt below.

"Heatherheart!" Honeysong called out for the she-cat. "I think I've found what we're looking for!"

The deputy soon was standing next to the tabby. They peered down into the hole one last time and tried to scent anything down there.

"I think we've just found the spot," Heatherheart smiled.

~~~~~~~

Honeysong and Heatherheart came walking back into the cave. They were excited to share the news with the leader.

"I'm glad that the two of you are okay," Curlstar said, padding over to them. "Did you find anything?"

"We think we've found the perfect place," Honeysong told the leader. Curlstar seemed happy, but realized moving all the cats there would be difficult.

"Alright, we should move in groups. Kits and apprentices must be with three older warriors. Heatherheart will lead the first group and Honeysong will take another one. Once those two are back another two groups will go until all cats are out of the cave."

The cats started gathering around forming their separated groups. Honeysong's first group was Poppymist, Timberfang, Featherpaw, Marigoldpaw, and Dustywing. Heatherheart had Squirrelskip, Pebblewing, Sweetkit, Emberkit, Thistlekit, Mintspark, and Frostcloud.

The two groups took off to the new area. The wind was blowing really strong now. Honeysong was having a hard time making sure
~~~~~~~

Marigoldpaw and Featherpaw were alright.

"Let's keep moving," Honeysong tried to encourage the cats.

They kept moving away until a strong gust of wind blew next to them. Marigoldpaw had the wind knocked out from under her. She lost her grip in the ground below. Honeysong rushed to save her, but it was too late. The golden apprentice already blew away.

"We have to keep moving!"

"What about Marigoldpaw! We can't leave her!" Featherpaw cried.

"I'm sorry, Featherpaw. We can't find her now. You must get yourself into safety."

Luckily the rest of it was alright. The family made it in the dens. Soon the rest of the clan followed them in.

As Honeysong finished off her last round with Curlstar now coming along, a cat was seen in the distance. They were crawling over calling out something for them to hear.

Then the cat got closer and Honeysong could scent a Morningclan tom. Honeysong went over to the tom.

"I have important news to tell you. There is a secret area somewhere in your camp. It is from the ancestors. The cat of the trees revealed how we could stay safe," Riverstripe said.

"Thank you," Curlstar dipped her head. He returned the gesture and turned around making way back to his territory.

"Let's get to shelter," Honeysong smiled at the leader.

"I'm tired of all this wind and rain. I'm ready to feel dry again," Curlstar smiled back.

The two took off back to the Cottenclan camp, following after their clanmates down into the tunnels.

Chapter 31

[image]

Ryefeather was curled into a corner. All of Meadowclan has been hiding out in the newly found caves. Morningclan has been the one to send the message after finding the prophesized cat. Apparently, it was an apprentice in their clan that lived among their ancestors.

The storm was still raging outside. No cat dares to peek out to see if it had cleared up or not. Cheetahstar has been making sure that no cats venture up there either, not wanting to lose warriors.

Ryefeather laid off to the side. There wasn't much to do in these tunnels. Most cats didn't really need his help. The only person he could talk to was Wolfshine. Staying down here wasn't as easy as he hoped. It was harder to be with Wolfshine since all the clan had eyes on them. They couldn't hide in his den anymore. They really could only have a small talk here and there.

The tunnels did supply prey, but not as much as they hoped for. The elders and Wolfshine always receive prey to eat. Most warriors and apprentices would also eat. One thing Ryefeather noticed was Cheetahstar always declining prey whenever Plumbreeze tried to get him to eat. He would always tell her, "Give it to some cat that needs it. My clan comes first."

The tom was getting skinnier. Some of his ribs are now sticking out from his sides.

"Hey, Ryefeather," he looked over. Plumbreeze stood next to the medicine cat. "Could you check on Cheetahstar? He hasn't been eating lately and I'm starting to get worried."

"I've noticed it too. I'll try to get him when he's calmed down. He'll better listen to me that way," he told her.

"Thank you, Ryefeather." She dipped her head and walked off to continue her duties.

That was his trick that he learned from Blackstep. The old medicine had helped Cheetahstar be kitted. He's known him ever since he was born. He's learned how to talk to the leader whenever he was refusing or was angry at something.

Wolfshine then padded over to see him next. A smile was planted on her face. She stopped in front of him and heaved out a sigh and said, "I'm here for you to check up on the kits. I've been trying to get lots of exercise before I can't. This thing really makes it a lot harder."

"Well, I'll be happy to make sure everything is okay," he smiled back at her.

Wolfshine laid down and he began to place his paws on her stomach. He felt for the tiny kits that were growing inside. He felt warmth rush through him when he felt his little bundles squirming around inside, underneath his paws.

"They seemed to be doing alright. I guess your exercising has got them all hyped up too."

"I wonder if they're telling me to lie down. They always do it whenever I'm up walking around."

"I believe they love it." Ryefeather could feel a purr in the back of his throat. He really wanted to snuggle with his mate, but he knew that he couldn't in front of all his clanmates.

"Do you know when they'll be born?" Wolfshine interrupted his thoughts.

"I believe in a moon. They seemed to want to come out into this world now," he replied.

"Well little ones, I'm afraid you can't. Terrible times are happening now. I can't allow you to be born. Please wait just a little bit longer," she whispered to her stomach.

The day has passed and Ryefeather went off to find Cheetahstar. He was resting in his own makeshift bed. He looked completely worn out.

"How are you, Cheetahstar?" He asked, sitting in front of him.

"I'm alright. I'm glad that we've found these tunnels. Meadowclan would have suffered greatly if we didn't."

"Thank Starclan." Ryefeather paused as a silence swept through the air. "I've noticed you're refusing to eat anything. You know that you must also be strong enough to help the clan too."

"I want to know that all of my clanmates have eaten. I'll eat knowing their stomachs are full for the night."

"Why don't you have something tonight? It doesn't have to be a big piece of prey. We could share it together if you want."

"You can have it. You haven't eaten either. I'll be fine." Cheetahstar's head dropped down. Ryefeather could see the tom trying to hide his pain. He quickly put on a bright expression in order to hide it from the medicine cat.

"Just something Cheetahstar. I can tell you're not feeling well."

"It isn't that. I just ran into a big rock when I was out hunting in the tunnels. Go on and have something for yourself."

Ryefeather gave up for now. He'll try again tomorrow. He could hear his own stomach growling for food. He took a small scrawny rabbit off the tiny prey pile. He went over to his own spot and began to munch on the prey.

Once he was finished, he was feeling drowsy and rested his head on his paws, and fell asleep for the night.

~~~~~~~

"Ryefeather! Wake up, quickly!" The light brown tom blinked his eyes open. Plumbreeze was standing there. A scared expression was on her face. "Come on! Something is wrong with Cheetahstar!"

He leaped onto his paws and ran after the black she-cat. They stopped over a somewhat limp body of their leader.
~~~~~~~

"Move back. Let me examine him," Ryefeather told them. He checked the leader. He couldn't believe it. Cheetahstar lost a life due to his hunger. *He now only has three lives left.* "He'll be fine. He's losing a life. Go fetch some prey and water for when he wakes up. Make sure he eats even if he refuses."

Eagletail and Bluemist ran off to fetch the items he requested. He stayed next to the leader in case he woke before they arrived.

Eagletail came back with some prey when Cheetahstar's eyes blinked open. He looked around at all the cats surrounding him.

"What's going on?" he asked.

"You just lost a life. You must eat in order to regain your strength," Plumbreeze told him.

"I don't need it."

"Yes, you do," Ryefeather told him sternly. "I'm your medicine cat and you must eat this. You've just lost a life and you're not going to be strong again unless you eat something."

Cheetahstar looked away but could feel all the pressure gazing on him. He scooted the prey closer and took a bite. The clan sighed in relief and Plumbreeze sent them away to focus on their duties again.

"Thank you," Plumbreeze told him.

"Don't worry too much. I'll keep my eye on him," he reassured her.

That wasn't it for today though. Swiftcloud and Moorpatch came running into the area. The tom was carrying a limp body on his back.

"Ryefeather!" They shouted. He ran over to them. The tom dropped the body of Dewspring on the ground. Her eyes were barely opened.

"What happened? He urgently asked them.

"We went up to see the storm outside when a huge gust of wind came over and blew Dewspring off her paws since she hopped out of the hole. She crashed into a rock and passed out," Swiftcloud said.

He checked her head and saw a big gash on the side. Blood pooled out from the wound. He was going to fetch herbs when he noticed the flank of the she-cat wasn't moving. He placed his ear on her and there wasn't any movement.

"Dewspring is dead," he announced.

The she-cat's three kits came running over and began to cry on their mother's dead body. Ryefeather felt a little sympathy for them but remembered who their father was.

Rabbitstorm padded over behind him. Ryefeather didn't look at him in the eyes. He buried his nose into her fur. He then licked each of the apprentices' heads.

"Everything will be alright," he told them.

Ryefeather now felt anger. Rabbitstorm never comforted him when Dawnpetal was killed. He was left alone to grieve. He was now watching him comfort his other three kits since their own mother died too.

"Will she go to Starclan?" Shinepaw asked.

"She will run with the stars," Rabbitstorm replied.

"Why did she have to do that? She knew we couldn't go up there," Wildpaw whined.

"Now she's gone and we'll never see her again," Badgerpaw cried.

The clan began to comfort the depressed apprentices. Ryefeather couldn't go near them and walked off to collect some remaining rosemary and prepared Dewspring's body for a vigil.

I really don't like you since you took Rabbitstorm, but this is my duty and I'll make sure you are well prepared for your vigil tonight.

Chapter 32

[image]

Pinepaw now finally felt some relief. The storm was starting to lighten up. The clan was safe in the tunnels. It was tricky to move back into the camp with the wind blowing fiercely past their ears. Sadly, two of the cats were blown away. They were Redripple and Minnowslip.

The clan has been mourning their deaths since. But times were starting to be better. Lionstar was going to send out a small group of cats to check outside of the tunnels. He feels like it is safe to come out now.

"Do you think he'll send out apprentices?" Cloverpaw asked. She was looking over at the leader, who was speaking quietly with Shimmersky.

"Most likely not," Sandypaw shrugged. "Us apprentices never get to do anything dangerous. Don't bother thinking about it."

"Yeah, Lionstar wouldn't put us in any danger," Pinepaw agreed.

The three watched the leader and deputy intently, waiting for the moment when they would send out the cats.

"Cats of Morningclan," the leader's voice rang through the tunnels. "Gather around."

Pinepaw stood up and walked over to the makeshift clearing. Lionstar stood in the center with his deputy at his side. The cats all gathered around to hear the words of their leader.

"Shimmersky and I have decided who will go on the patrol. Berrypool, Snowheart, Ravenfall, Stormwhisker, and Shimmersky."

"I know we knew he wasn't going to let us go, but I still had a little hope that we would have gone. We're almost warriors, I don't see

why we can't go," Sandypaw huffed.

"No cat should complain about the leader's decision," a voice was heard behind the three apprentices. They turned around and saw Sunstep standing behind them. "Lionstar doesn't want inexperienced apprentices going out into danger. You should be happy you're not going to hurt yourselves."

"I'm sorry, Sunstep," Sandypaw meowed.

The medicine cat flicked his tail and turned away from the group with a grumble.

Sandypaw turned away and walked off, not saying anything to her littermates.

"She should have seen it coming," Cloverpaw shrugged.

"Maybe she is frustrated since Ravenfall and Berrypool are going on the patrol," Pinepaw suggested.

Pinepaw watched as the five cats went up the tunnel towards the entrance of the dark tunnels. He hoped that Morningclan wouldn't have to stay down here anymore. He wanted to be swimming around in the water, catching the fish that swam underneath him.

"Pinepaw," Tawnypool smiled as she padded over to the apprentice. "Do you think we'll be able to leave today?"

"I hope so. I miss being out in the fresh air," Pinepaw said.

"Well, all we can do is hope. Starclan will make sure that no cat will be injured."

"I hope so." Pinepaw looked back over to where the patrol disappeared. Berrypool was on that patrol. He really hoped that his mother would come back with no scratches on his pelt.

Luckily, during the time waiting for the patrol's return, Tawnypool stayed close by his side. He was grateful for the she-cat's comfort.

"Hey! The patrol's back," a cat called out. Pinepaw leaped to his

paws and ran over to see all five of the cats walking in. None of them seemed harmed and they all carried a warm smile on their faces.

Lionstar pushed to the front in order to hear the report from them. "Well, what is there to say?"

"Morningclan should be free to return to its camp," Shimmersky reported, happily.

All the cats began to cheer. The storm was finally over and it was time to return home. We'll have the open land again and breathe in the fresh air outside. Be able to swim in the rushing rivers. It all was coming back. They'll live a normal life once again.

Morningclan now began to gather everything up from the tunnels. Lionstar wanted them to be out of there as quickly as they could.

Pinepaw was prancing all around on his paws as he took some of the freshkill. He followed Snowheart up the pathway out of the dark tunnels. He could see the light peeking inside, showing the exit, which wasn't too far away now.

He broke free from the darkness and hoped out of the hole. He took a deep breath of fresh air. He looked around and wasn't expecting any of this. Branches and leaves all scattered in the area around him. Out in the distance, a few trees had fallen or were about to.

"I guess we shouldn't have expected everything to look nice," Cloverpaw says as she walked up next to him.

They went off and looked around the camp. They had a lot of cleaning up and repairing to do.

"Streamsong and Stormwhisker, I want the two of you to travel to the other clans. Make sure they know it is safe and inform them that we'll hold a Gathering tomorrow," Lionstar ordered. The two nodded and they took off out of the camp. "Everyone else, Shimmersky will send out a small hunting patrol while the others will stay here and begin to clean the camp."

Foxshade, Tawnypool, Rowanfrost, and Riverstripe all went out

hunting on the patrol.

Pinepaw was assigned to repair the nursery. He wove the brambles in to make sure that no kits would have to sleep unprotected.

"Hey, Pinepaw." He turned and Snowheart sat there. She seemed a little nervous about something.

"What's up?" he asked. "Is everything alright? You seem a little off."

"Yeah, everything is alright. I just wanted to tell you something important. I'm actually expecting kits."

Pinepaw stopped and stared at her. He wasn't expecting this kind of news. "Who are they?"

"Well, Riverstripe and I have decided to become mates when we first went into the tunnels."

Pinepaw smiled at his friend. "Congratulations! I'll make sure this den is extra well built to make sure you and your kits are well protected."

"Thank you," Snowheart came up and licked his head.

~~~~~~~

Pinepaw followed after Lionstar as they walked to Tall Stones. The camp was doing alright. Cats have been working hard all day to make sure it was cleaned up. The nursery was the first one done and Snowheart immediately moved into there.

Pinepaw watched as the white she-cat's mate, Riverstripe, would constantly check on the expecting she-cat. He was happy that she found someone that truly loved her. *That should be me and Tawnypool soon*, he thought to himself.

All of the other clans were here already. It looked like Cottonclan had just arrived seconds before them. The Cottonclan leader wasn't among them. He couldn't see Curlstar in the crowd of cats.

Lionstar hopped onto his stone and announced that the gathering
~~~~~~~

would begin.

"Marshclan is recovering well. We have cleared out the camp and are working on repairing the dens," Flamestar said.

"We owe it all to Morningclan who figured out the cat of the pines," Cheetahstar meowed. Pinepaw could feel his clanmates' eyes all looking over at him. "Could we meet this cat who saved the clans?"

Lionstar dipped his head over to him and Pinepaw walked to the front.

"It was an apprentice!" He could hear some cat whisper. Murmurs all around him began to whisper about him. He tried to block it out, but it was hard.

"You mean an apprentice was the one who saved us," Flamestar questioned.

"Yes, Pinepaw dreamt of our ancestors dealing with the same storm that happened moons ago. He learned about the tunnels and we immediately searched for them. Seeing that he was right, we sent cats to the other clans to make sure they knew as well."

"Pinepaw!" Cats started to cheer his name. He licked the patch of fur in embarrassment. He wasn't expecting this.

"May we continue?" The original Cottonclan deputy meowed. The other three leaders dipped their heads seeming like they knew the news that was to follow. "Curlstar sadly passed away and I, Heatherstar, became the new leader of Cottonclan. I've traveled to Sacred Hollow and received my nine lives. I've named Timberfang as the deputy."

"We're sorry to hear of Curlstar's death. May she be safe in Starclan," Cheetahstar dipped his head.

The other clans reported their news. Each clan shared their losses of cats during the storm and then the Gathering ended. Pinepaw walked back to Morningclan's territory feeling a bit relieved. The clans could now live in peace once again.

Pinepaw entered the camp. Some cats were still awake, finishing up repairs for the night. Pinepaw dragged his paws into the halfway done apprentices' den. He plopped down onto his nest and curled up. He settled his tail down onto his nose. He shuts his eyes and lets his sleep drift him away.

Chapter 33

[image]

Honeysong dragged another limb out of the camp. Dustywing was on the other side, holding the other part of the branch. They helped one another drag it out to the pile Cottonclan had made outside.

"I can't wait until all of this is over with," Honeysong cried.

"The storm did a lot of damage to the camp. It won't clean up itself," Dustywing mentioned.

"I know. I just wished I could go out and hunt instead of picking up sticks."

"Timberfang will make sure that everyone will get their chance of going out of the camp."

Honeysong's heart dropped. Curlstar sadly died before the storm was over. The former leader had gotten an infection. Mouseshine was really running low on herbs and couldn't treat Curlstar. The whole clan watched as she passed away and joined Starclan.

Heatherstar traveled to the Sacred Hollow as soon as Cottonclan was safe to leave. Mouseshine joined along with her and she came back as the new leader of Cottonclan. She appointed Timberfang as the succeeding deputy. The tom was very honored to be chosen.

"This is how life moves on. Curlstar will be honored and I'm sure everyone will miss her," Heatherstar said once she returned from her leadership ceremony.

"Honeysong," Timberfang called her. The honey colored she-cat turned her head and padded over to the deputy. "You can lead a border patrol."

Her ears perked up. *I can finally stop cleaning up the camp!*

"Make sure to be back a little towards the end of sunhigh. Squirrelskip's kits are becoming apprentices today."

"Alright," she said and padded off.

She ended up with Dustywing, Mintspark, Pebblewing, and Featherpaw. They padded through the forest, breathing in the last of the rainy scent.

"I definitely hate water after all that," Pebblewing scowled. "I hope it doesn't rain for many moons."

"Well, maybe a light drizzle so that there isn't a drought," Mintspark told her father.

They came up to the border that they shared with Marshclan. One of their patrols had just arrived too. Honeysong could recognize Dawnberry, Darkwhisper, and Forestshadow.

"Greetings," they waved their tails. Honeysong dipped her head back. "Is everything well with Cottonclan?"

"We're slowly making progress in removing all the debris from the camp," Pebblewing replied.

"That is nice to hear. Marshclan is also working hard to remove all the debris from the storm. We've just finished the dens yesterday," Dawnberry meowed.

"Hey," Forestshadow bumped in. "Have you seen any of the cats who traveled to the Twolegplace? The storm is over now, so they should be returning back to the clans soon. Flamestar was worried about them and wanted to see if you've seen them?"

"No, we haven't," Honeysong replied. "There hasn't been a trace of them. We could check in with Meadowclan since their territory is much closer to the Twolegplace."

"Thank you," the black tom dipped his head to her. "I only hope that they will return safely."

"They are probably getting ready to journey home, seeing that

the rain has now stopped," Dustywing chipped in.

"I hope so," Darkwhispered said.

They finished up marking along the borders and waved goodbye to one another as they left to travel back to camp. Honeysong led the patrol back to the camp but sent Mintspark off to speak with Meadowclan to see if they've seen the missing clan cats.

"It looks like we didn't have too much fun time," Honeysong sighed when Dustywing came up to her.

"You still got to go out," he reassured her.

"I know. I wished I went hunting instead. It was nice to lead a patrol after a while though."

Honeysong dipped her head to the tom, saying she needed to go speak with Heatherstar. She padded towards the leader's den and popped her head in.

Heatherstar just finished discussing with Timberfang. The deputy moved past her and left the two of them. The leader flicked her tail to come over to her.

"What would you like to talk about?" Her former mentor asked.

"There are a couple of things," Honeysong began. "I've sent Mintspark to Meadowclan to talk to them about any of the cats who went to shelter in the Twolegplace."

"That's good. Hopefully, they'll come back soon. We really could use the extra paws in order to repair all the damage that's been done," she responded.

"The second thing is about Dustywing."

The black and orange she-cat leaped up onto her paws. "Did he ask you again? Did you give him a response?"

"He hasn't asked, but I was thinking of asking him. I think I'm ready to become his mate now. I just don't know how."

"Maybe if you're not wanting to, you could show signs that you're ready to become his mate. I'll give you a little time to yourselves after the apprentice ceremony if you want?"

"Thank you," Honeysong touched noses with her. "You really have helped me a lot through all these moons. Even when I was an apprentice. I couldn't thank you enough."

"You don't need to."

They both exited the den and Honeysong watched the leader leap up and call the clan together to hold the ceremony for the three kits. They were hopping around their mother, too excited to become an apprentice.

"Today is the day that three of our kits have reached the age of six moons and are ready to become apprentices."

Mouseshine took Emberpaw as her apprentice. Amberwish had got Sweetpaw. Honeysong believed it was since Marigoldpaw was killed in the storm. Lastly, Thistlepaw had gotten Timberfang. Honeysong could tell that the leader was debating whether the tom would become her apprentice, but since she just told her that she was moving a step in her relationship, the leader decided to pick another cat.

The clan was cheering out the apprentice's names. During that time, Honeysong went to find Dustywing. The tom was sitting off on the side. She made her way around the crowd and tapped her tail on his shoulder. He whipped around and smiled seeing her.

Honeysong gathered up her courage and slipped in close to the black tom. The tips of their furs brushed up against one another.

Dustywing seemed taken back from the unexpected action. He glanced down at her but didn't say anything.

During the rest of the day, Honeysong was a little bit more touchy towards the tom and seemed happier around him as well. Dustywing didn't know what happened to her.

They padded out in the forest together. There weren't any interruptions, which Heatherstar promised.

Honeysong gazed into the tom's eyes. Their paws were almost on top of one another.

"Honeysong," Dustywing breathed out. She nodded her head. "What's wrong? Why are you like this?"

"I've been thinking a lot," She paused. "About us."

"Are you ready?" His eyes sparkled when she nodded her head to his question. "I can't believe it. You want to become my mate?! I wasn't expecting this so soon."

"I only needed a little time to think about what I really wanted. I realized that you haven't strayed from my side. You've been there to help me get through all the hardships I've faced. I thought long and hard. I finally think I'm ready to finally accept your proposal."

Dustywing leaned forward and licked the side of her ear. Honeysong nuzzled against the tom's fur. She felt a lot happier after the confession. The missing piece was finally put in the right spot. That missing piece was Dustywing. He is the one that she wants and no other cat could replace him.

Dustywing also seemed overjoyed by the fact that they were finally official. Honeysong and Dustywing have become mates with one another.

They went the whole way back to camp with their fur brushed together and their tails were intertwined with one another. A smile was plastered on both of their faces. Honeysong was a little embarrassed walking into camp. All of her clanmates' eyes were staring at them. A few whispers also spread throughout the camp.

Honeysong looked up at her new mate. He didn't seem fazed by the clan. He only led her over to the freshkill pile. He picked a piece before carrying it over and laying down next to her. He pushed the prey over for her to take a bite first.

Honeysong took a small bite and once again looked around the

camp. More cats have started to whisper about them.

"They're only talking about how you've finally accepted to become my mate," Dustywing told her. "Take no notice of them." He used his tail to make her turn her head over to him. "*Only focus on me now*." Honeysong glanced down at the sentence and nodded.

The rest of the day went well. Dustywing and Honeysong were now inseparable and did everything together. Before they fell asleep, Dustywing groomed her pelt in order for her to fall asleep faster.

I've really found the best tom in the entire clan, she thought to herself. She took one last glance up at the tom before resting her head on her paws. She allowed the softness of Dustywing's grooming to sending her off to sleep.

Chapter 34

[image]

The sky was as bright as ever since the storm happened. Tinyslip smiled to herself. *We're finally going to be able to go home!* She turned back to all the other cats. They were gathering up, ready to leave and return back home. It had been a little hard on them, but they pushed through.

"I can't wait to go back. I want these kits to be born within Cottonclan," Pouncemist said. The she-cat was growing close with Spiderspot during this storm. Eventually, it was announced that the she-cat was actually pregnant with his kits.

Dustkit and Applekit were also eager to get home since they were ready to become apprentices. Lilywhisker had a hard time controlling them since they found out they were leaving today. They were running around, getting under everyone's paws. They boasted to Silentkit and Bumblekit about it too.

"I really miss Fernstep and Flamestar," Brackenpaw said, walking up next to her. "What do you think they're up to? Will the kits be born yet?"

"I don't think they're ready yet. You'll be there by the time they are born," Tinystep promised him.

Before the large group of cats would leave for the clans, Tinyslip and Sage were to head over to say her last goodbyes to the two other cats.

"Honestly, I will really miss them," Sage sighed. "But, I know that I want to be here with the clans. I want to be free from the housefolks. I like having the wind brush through my fur all day."

"Well, in Marshclan, there are plenty of pine trees around. There isn't much wind there," Yellowflight jokes.

"At least I'll be running through the marshes catching frogs."

It came to the time when the two she-cats would head over for Sage to say her farewells to Misty and Snickers. Sage led the way through the twoleg dens. They leaped onto a fence and walked along with it until the familiar house came into view.

Sage leaped down and ran over once she saw a fluffy gray she-cat sitting there, cleaning herself.

"Sage!" Misty leaped onto her paws. "I was wondering where you've been?"

"I've stayed with the clan cats this whole time and I actually love it. I wanted to come by and say goodbye to you and Snickers," the blueish gray she-cat meowed.

"You're leaving?" Misty asked. Sage only replied with a nod. "Well, I guess meeting these wild cats really changed you into one yourself. I can't change your decision, but I can say that you'll be missed around here. Your grumpiness probably won't though."

The two shared one last lick on the forehead when the bigger light orange tabby came walking out of the twoleg den.

"You're leaving?" Snickers glanced at her.

"Yes, I'm moving into one of the clans. They're leaving today."

"Why? You'll have to hunt for all your food when the housefolk will feed you every day. You won't have to make sure you're killed every day when you'll be curled up on your bed."

"I've made my decision," Sage said with a sort of snap in her tone. "I want to be free from being trapped inside most of the time. I'm wild, not a house cat."

Snickers eyes dropped knowing that she can't make the she-cat change her mind. They shared a sweet moment. One, that Tinyslip believed was the first they've shared together.

"We better leave now," she told her. "They might think we've

decided to become kittypets."

Sage shared one last goodbye to the two cats. She then turned and face Tinyslip. A determined look appeared on her face. "I'm ready!"

~~~~~~~

The cats all gathered together and made their way around the Twoleg place. Brackenpaw and Frogsplash padded alongside her. Tinyslip could feel her fur sparking up with excitement. She was ready to go back to Marshclan, it was her home.

"I really miss the marshes," Frogsplash sighed. "I can feel my paws itching to start running back."

"I want to see my kin again," Brackenpaw bounced beside her. "I need to show them all the things I learned since we've left. I'll catch the biggest prey to bring back to camp to impress them."

Tinyslip turned her head back. Sage was following not too far behind her. She was watching Silentkit and Bumblekit chasing after the leaves blowing by. Yellowflight was walking next to her.

"I think Sage might have found a nice tom to be with," she said, nodding her head back to the pair.

"Would Yellowflight really be ready for another mate after Spottedheart? You remember how broken he looked once Gorseshine reported the news of her death," Frogsplash mentioned.

"Sage might be the she-cat to fix that broken heart."

They continued on their way, Cottonclan would be the first camp they would pass by. Spiderspot was already pointing out where the camp was at in the distance.

"We're almost home. We'll be raising our kits with the rest of the clan," he told his mate, Pouncemist.

When the tom pointed out the territory, they started to quicken their steps. They've been away for so long now that all of them really missed being with the rest of their clanmates.
~~~~~~~

"I can't believe that it is so near now," Tinyslip said to Frogsplash.

They reached the Cottonclan camp and said their goodbyes to Snowcloud, Spiderspot, Pouncemist, and Amberwish. The four took off into their camp. Tinyslip could hear the cheers of their clanmates, glad to see them return safely.

"That will be us soon enough," Frogsplash smiled.

Meadowclan was the next one to come up too. That is when most of the cats left. Drizzlefrost, Whitefire, Hazelflower, Iceleap, Harerunner, Breezepool, Morningpaw, Ravenpaw, Grasslight, and Brindlefrost all returned back to their home clan.

Once they crossed the river, Brackenpaw was getting very excited. He was almost running back to the camp. Tinyslip had to hold him by the tail in order for him to stay with the group. "Remember the last time you ran off," she reminded him. He looked back at her with an embarrassed look.

They came up to the edge of the Marshclan border. Tinyslip looked over at the remaining Morningclan cats, Lilywhisker, Applekit, Dustkit, Birchclaw, and Ottersplash.

"I hope you have safe travels on your way back home," Yellowflight told the other cats. "May Starclan light your path."

They waved their tails goodbye and headed off towards their own territory.

"We're almost home," Creamspot meowed.

"You'll get to see what it is like in Marshclan now," Maplepelt said to the two kits. Since they were a bit younger when they left, the two really don't remember much about the clan in the first place.

Silentkit and Bumblekit pounced around their legs. "I'm ready to become a warrior!" Bumblekit squealed.

"You can't be a warrior yet," Yellowflight told the tom-kit. "First, you'll have to be six moons to be an apprentice. Then once you've

trained enough, Flamestar and your mentor will decide when is the best time for you to become a warrior."

"Yellowflight? Frogsplash? Is that really you?" A voice was heard over in the distance. Robinheart's head popped up from the bushes. "You guys are back!"

"It is nice to see a familiar face again," Creamspot meowed.

"Come on! The clan will be happy to see all of you again!" The reddish brown she-cat dashed off towards the camp. The group followed after her.

"Do you think they'll allow me into the clan?" Sage came up and asked Tinyslip.

"Marshclan is low on warriors right now. After we tell Flamestar how much of a help you've been to us, I'm sure he'll invite you to join right away."

They all hurried into camp, where all her clanmates were standing out in the clearing, wide eyed at their arrival.

"It is nice to see you all returning," Flamestar padded over to them. He ducked down and touched noses to Brackenpaw. "I'm happy that you've returned safely."

Fernstep came wobbling out of the nursery. Her stomach was much bigger than the last time Tinyslip had seen her.

"Brackenpaw, are you alright? Did you get hurt at all?" she said with worry in her voice.

"I'm fine. Tinyslip took very good care of me," he praised her.

"Thank you." Fernstep looked over at her. Tinyslip only dipped her head to the pregnant she-cat.

Newtleaf also peeked out of the nursery. Her stomach wasn't swollen anymore. She must have kitted while we were away.

"Who might you be?" Flamestar looked over at Sage.

"This is a kittypet that stayed with us during the time next to the Twoleg place," Yellowflight said.

"Hello, my name is Sage. I wish to join Marshclan. I've always wanted to escape my housefolks and meeting these cats really pushed me to finally leave and start a new life."

"Well, I can tell you have spirit."

"I've been teaching her all about fighting and hunting," Tinyslip told the leader.

"Now, I don't know your skills yet, but I trust my warrior," Flamestar stood up proud. "Sage, from this moment on, you'll be known as Sageleaf. You'll be a full warrior of Marshclan." He rested his muzzle on her shoulder. He must have whispered what to do and Sageleaf licked his shoulder. The clan cheered out her name.

"We have a new warrior and three new kits into Marshclan!" The clan cheered out their names.
"Sageleaf!"
"Stonekit!"
"Bluekit!"
"Birchkit!"

Tinyslip smiled. She now really felt whole again. Back with her clan that she was born into. *This is where I'm supposed to be.*

I'm here to report that the book is almost over. There is only a few chapters left now. ✌

Chapter 35

[image]

Pinepaw stood in the clearing. Sandypaw and Cloverpaw at his side. They were waiting for their mentors to arrive. Today was the day of their warrior assessment. The three of them could hardly sleep last night due to their excitement for the upcoming day.

"What is taking them so long?" Sandypaw complained. "I just want to complete it soon so I can receive my warrior name."

"I'm sure they'll be here soon," Cloverpaw meowed.

Pinepaw looked over to see the Applekit and Dustkit playing with one another at the nursery's entrance. The two would also receive their apprentice names before their warrior ceremony.

The cats who've traveled to the twoleg place, have begun to settle well back into clan life. Some clanmates were a little distant from them since they did leave the clan during a hard time just to protect themselves. Pinepaw noticed some cats talking badly about them.

"They should have stayed with the clan. They vowed to protect their clan with their lives and then when something happens, they run off to be kittypets for a little bit," Foxshade hissed.

"You shouldn't be talking bad about the senior warriors," Ottersplash glared at her.

"At least I was here for my clan."

"Enough," Shimmersky came running over to the two she-cats. "We've already talked about this. You will welcome them back no matter what. They are your clanmates and also lived much longer than you have."

Pinepaw scowled at the red she-cat. Foxshade was still as

headstrong as ever. Nothing changed when she became a warrior beside her becoming more demanding over the apprentices. Stormwhisker always shooed her away whenever she came to boss him around.

"Are you three ready?" Pinepaw flicked his head over and saw Birchclaw, Ravenfall, and Stormwhisker. They sat in a line, showing happy expressions for their apprentices' big day.

"Always!" Sandypaw bounced up on her paws.

"Alright," Ravenfall smiled. "You'll have to start out hunting first. The only thing we require is that you must catch at least two fish and one land prey."

"Your mentor will tell you the next step after you've completed your first part," Stormwhisker said.

"Also, you can't help one another out. We'll be watching you from afar," Birchclaw meowed.

Pinepaw nodded his head and they sent them out of camp. He raced over to one of his favorite spots to catch fish. He stopped along the edge and moved to remove his shadow off the waters below him. He glanced down in the small ripples until a nice trout swam by.

Pinepaw readied himself and dived into the water and fumbled around with the trout. He latched his jaws onto the slippery body. He pushed his body back up to the surface and scrambled out the river. He dropped it on the ground and quickly made sure that the fish was dead. He smiled to himself before walking downstream to spot any other fish that was scared from his dive.

He spotted another fish a little farther and sat along the side. This fish wasn't too deep in the water. He raised his paw and scooped it out of the water and flung it onto the ground. He leapt on it and swiftly killed it with a killingl bite.

That's two fish and now I need to catch something on land. He was a little nervous to hunt on land. Honestly, he really was bad at land

hunting. He tried to sniff out any prey, but nothing was around him. He looked over and quickly buried the fish to make sure nothing else would take his fish.

He walked around the territory trying to find something. He'd already missed a sparrow that was pecking at a worm a bit ago.

Pinepaw stopped and sighed. He listened to the noise around him. He heard a squeak. His head shot around and saw a mouse peeking out from under a leaf. He dropped into a hunter's crouch and slowly moved closer to the mouse.

He lowered his haunches and waited for the right moment. He was almost on top of the mouse and jumped. He landed his paws a little awkwardly. He quickly recovered and stomped on the mouse's tail. He grabbed the mouse's neck and quickly snapped it.

"I did it!" He cheered.

Stormwhisker came padding over to him. He was purring a little bit. "Nice work Pinepaw. Let's bring this back to camp and we can finish out your assessment."

~~~~~~~

Pinepaw sat in front of all the clan besides Applekit and Dustkit. They were holding their apprentice ceremony now.

"Applekit and Dustkit have reached the age of six moons and are ready to become apprentices. Streamsong you'll be Dustpaw's mentor. I hope you pass down your knowledge down to your new apprentice."

The silver she-cat walked up to her new apprentice. They touched one another's noses before sitting down beside one another.

"Berrypool you'll be Applekit's mentor. I hope you pass down your wisdom onto your new apprentice." Pinepaw felt happy seeing his mother receive her apprentice. It would be a little distraction from her three kits becoming warriors. She'll get to help raise the youth of the clan again.
~~~~~~~

"It is now time for the warrior ceremony of our three apprentices," Lionstar meowed. Pinepaw was ready. It was time to get his full warrior's name.

After the hunting, Pinepaw did very well in the next portions of the assessment. Stormwhisker had a lot to tell Lionstar once they got back to camp.

"I, Lionstar, leader of Morningclan, call upon our warrior ancestors to look upon these apprentices. They've trained in the ways of your noble code, and I command them as a warrior in their turn. Do you, Sandypaw, Pinepaw, and Cloverpaw, promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your clan, even if it costs your life?"

Pinepaw raised his muzzle and replied back to the leader with his littermates. "I do."

"Then by the powers of Starclan, I shall give them their warrior names. Cloverpaw from this moment on you'll be known as Clovershine. Starclan honors your compassion and we welcome you as a full warrior of Morningclan."

The leader moved in front of the brown and white dappled she-cat. He rested his head down onto her shoulder. Clovershine licked it in respect.

"Sandypaw from this moment on you'll be known as Sandyfur. Starclan honors your energy and we welcome you as a full warrior of Morningclan."

The same process repeated and Pinepaw was now the next in line. It was finally time. He's been debating what his warrior name is. Maybe Pinestep, Pineclaw, Pinetail. Whatever it was, he knew that Lionstar would pick the perfect name for him.

"Pinepaw from this moment on you'll be known as Pinestorm. Starclan honors your spirit and we welcome you as a full warrior of Morningclan."

Pinestorm felt Lionstar rest his muzzle over his shoulder. He

quickly licked the leader's shoulder, ready to hear the call of his clanmates.

"Clovershine!"
"Sandyfur!"
"Pinestorm!"

Pinestorm looked over and saw Tawnypool cheering out loudly. A sparkle was in her eyes. He felt happy now. He could now finally be with the beautiful she-cat.

Tawnypool came running up to him after the ceremony. She almost ran him over. She began to nuzzle into his dark brown fur.

"I'm so proud of you," she purred. She backed up a little to look him in the eyes. "I really like your warrior name too, Pinestorm."

"It couldn't be better than yours," Pinestorm smirked. She pawed at him.

"Look at them. Now the two of you can finally become mates," Clovershine said.

"When are the kits coming?" Sandyfur teased.

"Stop it," he folded his ears down in embarrassment.

Berrypool and Rowanfrost came over to the couple. They both looked very proud of their three kits.

"I can't believe you've become warriors," Berrypool nuzzled her three kits.

"Now I can officially hunt and fight beside my three kits," Rowanfrost meowed. "I know you'll be some of the best warriors in Morningclan."

"You can count on us," Sandyfur boasted.

"Pinestorm and Tawnypool will also give you kits in a few moons too," Clovershine nudged her brother. Pinestorm sent her a glare before licking his chest fur down.

"I know they will. I can't wait to see their little faces!" Berrypool meowed, happily. "I'll happily come and help you whenever they are born. I know some tricks when it comes to kits."

"Alright," Tawnypool said, a little nervous and embarrassed from the conversation.

Pinestorm looked up at the sky above them. The sun was beginning to set. It was now time for them to hold their silence for the night. The three new warriors made their way into the center of camp. Other warriors disappeared into their dens for the night.

He glanced over at the warrior's den. Tawnypool waved her tail to him with a smile on her face. She then turned and followed the other warriors into the den.

Pinestorm shut his eyes for a second. Thinking about the future yet to come. He pictured his life with Tawnypool and raised many kits for the clan. He felt pleased with the way his life was going now.

Chapter 36

[image]

Ryefeather entered the camp with a mouthful of herbs. Making his way across the camp back into his own den. Wolfshine was getting bigger by the day, he needed to be prepared for the she-cat's kitting.

Luckily, Wolfshine wasn't alone in the nursery anymore, Brightfeather had announced she was expecting again. Her apprentice, Badgerpaw, had now gone to Grasslight.

He dropped the herbs at the entrance of his den. He sorted them into separate piles and allowed them to dry out before he would move them into their assorted place in the den. His herbs stores were growing once again now the storm had passed. He was running low since he couldn't go out to collect them and a lot of them drowned from all the rain they've gotten.

"Ryefeather," A voice appeared into his den. He turned to see Brindlefrost padded in. There was a little limp when she walked. "I slipped on the mud outside camp and I scratched my shoulder on a sharp branch. Could you take a look at it?"

"Come here," he meowed.

The brown and white she-cat sat down and he came over and looked at the cut. It wasn't too bad. He could see that it wasn't too deep. "It isn't bad, but a little bit of rest wouldn't be harmful. I'll apply some marigold in case of an infection and dock to soothe the scratch."

He went into the back and scrambled through his supplies and came back and applied both herbs onto the she-cat. Brindlefrost murmured thanks before leaving the den.

Ryefeather then got some borage leaves and padded over to the nursery. Brightfeather and Wolfshine were both awake and talking

to one another. They smiled and waved their tails once they saw him come into the den.

"I've brought some borage leaves for you, Wolfshine," he told her after setting them down in front of her. "They'll help with your milk supply when the kits are born."

"Thank you," She smiled. "I can't wait for them to be born. I already love them, but imagine what they'll look like once I can see them. I'm tired of carrying them around in my stomach all the time." Wolfshine lapped up the leaves and swallowed them.

"I know," Brightfeather agreed. "With Mossyleaf, he was the only kit. He also was very good. He rarely got into any kind of trouble. He liked to sit at the entrance and watch the warriors come in and out of the camp. He grew up to be an amazing warrior."

Ryefeather came over and sat next to Wolfshine. He placed his paw on her stomach. He shut his eyes and moved his paw around, feeling the squirming kits inside of her.

He let out a quiet purr while he felt his own kits. He thought to himself about the little bundles finally being here and running around playing in the middle of camp. He pictured their fur colors, wondering if any would look like him or Wolfshine. How many toms and she-cats would she have?

"Would you like to know how many you're going to have?" Ryefeather asked her.

The silver tabby shook her head. "I'd like it to be a surprise," she meowed.

He peeked his head out of the den after saying goodbye to the two she-cats. He was happy that an experienced queen was also in there with his mate. Brightfeather had Mossyleaf not too long ago and now was expecting again. Moorpatch must be proud tom to have another litter of kits.

The moon was rising in the sky once Ryefeather gotten all the now dried herbs put away. He sat in his own nest and thought to

himself. Would he really be ready for these kits? Would Wolfshine tell them who their father really is? Would they ever know that he was their father?

He shook his head and laid down. His tail brushed up against his muzzle as he closed his eyes. He allowed the darkness to overtake him.

~~~~~~~

"Ryefeather, hurry! Wake up!" Brightfeather's meow sounded in the den. The light brown tom lifted his head to her cries. "Wolfshine is kitting now!"

He leaped onto his paws. He rushed over and picked up the bundle he made the previous in case of his mate's kitting.

He rushed out of the den and went straight to the nursery. He went inside and saw the silver tabby she-cat crying out in pain. Every few seconds, ripples moved over her stomach.

"Go fetch me a stick and some water for Wolfshine," he told Brightfeather. She nodded and went out of the den.

"It hurts!" Wolfshine cried. "Please make sure our kits are born okay."

"Everything is normal, Wolfshine," he reassured her. He slid some herbs over to her. "Eat these, they'll help with your kitting."

He placed his paws on her stomach. He felt the ripples rush over her stomach. Each time they happened, Wolfshine would cry out in pain. He would have to calm her each time.

Brightfeather came back in, some wet moss dripped onto the ground from her jaws. "I'd sent Morningpaw to find a sturdy stick," she told him. He nodded and took the moss. He placed it next to Wolfshine. The she-cat turned to drink from some of the water that pooled out as another stab of pain moved in her belly.

"It is almost time," he told her.
~~~~~~~

He kept his paws on her stomach as Morningpaw rushed into the den. She dropped the stick next to the kitting queen and left the den in a sprint.

"Here, bite on this when the pain comes. It'll help you," Brightfeather said and moved the stick towards Wolfshine. The silver tabby she-cat grabbed a hold onto it and started to crush the stick as the pain appeared.

"It is time," he told her. "Push with all you have."

He heard a grunt coming from the queen. She pushed hard in order for the first kit to slither out. He took it and passed it over to Brightfeather. She began to lick the kit in order for it to start breathing.

"It is a she-cat!" she exclaimed. Ryefeather quickly looked down at his daughter. She looked a lot like Wolfshine but had received her patterns from him.

Wolfshine grunted again and he turned his attention back to his mate. Another kit came out and he licked it. It was a gray tom. He licked at the tom-kit, trying his best to hear the little mew. Luckily, after a few laps, the tom-kit let out a loud squeal.

After the first two were born, two more kits came, a light brown tom and a cream colored she-cat.

Ryefeather could tell that Wolfshine was exhausted. Her eyes were barely open. He gave her some herbs to boost up her strength and some more borage leaves. Brightfeather has left to share prey with Moorpatch and to give Wolfshine a little bit of space.

He was getting ready to leave when Wolfshine stopped him. "Don't go," her tired voice whispered out. "I want you to help name them. You are their father."

"But, you're so tired. I think you should rest first," he told her.

"No, we might not have another chance." He gave in to her and went and sat in front of the four squirming bodies. Wolfshine flicked her tail over the firstborn she-kit. "I want her name to be

Dovekit."

He smiled and nodded his head. He bent forward and licked her on her head. "Dovekit," he whispered. He scanned the kits, thinking of another name for them. "I would like him to be Quailkit," he said, pointing at the gray tom-kit.

"I love it," Wolfshine said. "I this tom will be Cricketkit."

"The last she-kit can be Tumblekit," he said looking at the cream kit, now sleeping in her mother's warm belly.

"They are beautiful," Wolfshine said. "They're the best kits any she-cat could ever have."

"I love you," Ryefeather leaned down and licked her ear, affectionately.

He would then leave her to rest with the four newly birthed kits. He announced the names of the four kits. "Wolfshine had two she-cats named Dovekit and Tumblekit and two toms named Quailkit and Cricketkit."

The clan cheered for the newly born kits. Ryefeather felt happy about bringing these four kits into his clan. Any clan would be happy to have four healthy and strong kits, but Meadowclan was his home. He might not have had a great life, but Wolfshine and his four kits turned that around for him. He loved them with all his heart. He was happy once again.

Chapter 37

[image]

Pinestorm paced around outside in the clearing. Cries were heard throughout the camp. He just couldn't rest with his mate laying in the nursery.

Many moons have passed since the storm. The clans have changed so much. Both of his littermates have already found mates and have had kits. The three of them thought that he and Tawnypool would have been the first.

Sandyfur became Applestep's mate. The two had three kits, Lightpool, Fernpebble, and Redpelt. All three of their kits are now newly made warriors. Clovershine took Dustshade as her mate and they had two toms, Wavepaw and Stonepaw.

Along with his two littermates, Brightpool and Rowanfrost kitted a sibling for them, Brightmist. Pinestorm believed she looked almost exactly like her mother. They both had the same coat patterns and the same eye color.

"How is she doing," he turned around to see Shimmerstar. The she-cat had to face the death of her mate not too long ago in battle. It was the same battle that had killed Lionstar, making Shimmerstar the new leader. She had appointed his old mentor, Stormwhisker as her new deputy.

It was also around that time when the tom had brought in a kit, claiming it was his. He never reveal the mother, but now Tigerspot worked hard to show his loyalty to his father's clan and really was a big help in Morningclan. He's even taken a mate. Streamsong was now in the nursery expecting the tom's kits.

"She's in so much pain," he said worriedly. "I hope she's doing alright."

"Tawnypool is a strong warrior. She'll get through this. I remember having my own kits. It was a challenge but seeing their faces always made it better."

Pinestorm waited anxiously. He hoped that his mate and his kits would be alright. He ran his paw in the dirt below him to help calm his mind.

Sunstep's head peeked out from the den. He called him inside to see his new kits. Doepaw was at his side. The apprentice was Snowheart's only kit. Doepaw was the only kit to survive Snowheart's brutal birth. Because of that, Doepaw wanted to be a medicine cat to help all the other queens whenever they were kitting.

"You have three beautiful kits," Doepaw told him. "Two she-cats and a tom."

Pinestorm shot inside. Tawnypool smiled widely at him. She leaned down and licked the top of their heads. "Aren't they beautiful?"

He padded over and glanced down at the three bundles. They suckled at Tawnypool's stomach in order to drink some of the milk. They all looked like healthy young kits.

"They are," he smiled, joyfully.

"I've already thought of some names." She laid her tail over the tortoiseshell she-kit. "Her name will be Cherrykit." She then moved it over on to the dark brown tom-kit. "And his name to be Dark-kit. I'd left her just for you."

Pinestorm looked down at the calico she-kit. He didn't need to think of a name. He'd picked one out before Tawnypool was even expecting kits. "I want her name to be Rainkit."

"What a lovely name," she praised.

Pinestorm laid down and curled up around the small bundles. He wanted them to know that he was their father. He wanted to be here for his kits, like his own father was there for him. He licked

the top of their heads before nuzzling Tawnypool.

"I can't believe that we're parents now."

"Me too."

~~~~~~~

Tinyslip came inside the camp. Fresh kill hung in her jaws. She moved over to where the prey pile was. It was running a bit low, but with the prey she'd brought, it made it a little bigger.

She turned and looked for Frogsplash. He was resting in the warm sun off to the side of the camp. She moved over to the tom. She pressed her paw into his side to wake him up.

"Ah, my lovely kit," he meowed, moving to sit up. "Why are you here? Shouldn't you be with your mate?"

Tinyslip looked away in embarrassment. Actually she'd found a tom to be mates with. Creamspot had to steal her heart and now the pair had three kits. They were apprentices now, Goldenpaw, Rosepaw, and Smokepaw. They've really only been apprentices for three moons now.

"I guess I'll go find him," she began to pad away when he'd stopped her.

"Come speak with your father."

Tinyslip settles herself down next to the tom. She glanced at the tom's fur. It was a little matted and a few bones showed through his dull coat.

"Are you feeling alright? You don't look too good."

"I'm just getting old. What else do you expect from an old cat. I'm just happy that you've found a family over your own. Now I can leave here peacefully knowing that you have someone else you can love."

"Don't say that. I still love you too."
~~~~~~~

"I know that already."

Tinyslip looked around the camp. Sageleaf was huddled in close with her mate Forestshadow. When the she-cat had first come into Marshclan, her and the black tom clicked. It wasn't too long before the two would give the camp a set of kits, Icepaw and Blackpaw. Tinyslip spent a little bit of time in the nursery with the other she-cat while she'd been expecting.

These past few moons had been a little hard on Tinyslip. Dawnberry and her mate, Burnpelt, both passed away a few moons ago as a sickness swept into camp. The sickness also took the two elders Nettleleaf and Mudnose. The clan was now recovering well.

Before Dawnberry was killed, she had given Marshclan another warrior, Fireleap. He was very little when Dawnberry died. His other kin, Robinheart took care of him until he was made into an apprentice.

Tinyslip nodded off to her father and went to join Creamspot. He was in a conversation with Rustclaw and Brackenshadow. Tinyslip smiled seeing her old apprentice turn out to be a great warrior. When Flamestar given Brackenshadow his name, he'd personally thanked her for the hard work she'd put in to his training.

Rustclaw was actually his little sibling. He'd been right there when he was kitted and Brackenshadow was always there for his kin.

Brackenshadow was now also a father. His mate, Maplepelt had kitted four moons ago to Leafkit and Bloomkit. The tom had asked his father for her to train one of them once they've become six moons. She'd tried to deny it, but he insisted on it.

"How are the kits?" She asked him.

"They're being kits. Maplepelt has had a little trouble with them lately. Yesterday, Leafkit led Bloomkit into the warriors' den to see if they could walk around without being found. Bloomkit sneezed inside, making Silentstep and Bumblecloud spotting them."

"You must have your paws full," Creamspot chuckled. "I remember our kits when they were younger. Smokepaw believed that he'd be made leader once he was an apprentice."

Tinyslip looked to the side. Goldenpaw was with her mentor Newtleaf. They were just getting ready to go out for battle training.Tinyslip was a little hesitant when Flamestar made her kit Newtleaf's apprentice, but when the she-cat kitted Stoneheart, Bluepool, and Birchfur. She'd quit mooning with her father and left them alone.

Tinyslip felt happy. The only thing that worried her was Frogsplash, but she knew that the tom wouldn't be around forever. One day, she'll have to live on without him. For now, she'll grant many memories with him until she'll have to cherish them.

~~~~~~~

Honeysong snuggled in closer to Dustywing. The tom was grooming her pelt. He had always made sure that her fur was clean everyday. The two of them were getting older day by day.

A lot has changed for them. Honeysong had not one but two litters of kits. The first litter had just become full warriors a couple moons ago. They had two toms and a she-cat. The toms were Swiftfoot and Eagleflight and the she-cat was named Junipercloud.

It was only just yesterday that their other litter of kits was made into apprentices. Nightpaw had Thistlefang as his mentor and Sandpaw had Frostcloud. The two were so excited to become apprentices that they almost squashed Mintspark's kits, Brownkit and Spark-kit. Emberheart had to inspect them to make sure that they were okay.

The other queen had gotten a mate with one of Spiderspot and Pouncemist's kits. They had two kits, Leopardpelt and Oakstripe, who was the father of Spark-kit and Brownkit.

"Hey, Honeysong," the cream tabby she-cat opened her eyes. Their leader, Heatherstar stood over her. "Would you mind taking out a hunting patrol? You may choose the cats that would go with you."
~~~~~~~

"No problem," she meowed and stood up. Dustywing pouted a little but cheered up when she asked him to come along.

Honeysong had gathered Featherflower, Sweetmoon, and Junipercloud along with herself and Dustywing. They headed for the north side of the territory since nobody really came up here that often to hunt.

"It feels good to hunt with one of my kits," Honeysong said, rubbing against the black and white she-cat. "I bet it feels good to finally be a warrior?"

"Yeah, I've trained so hard to be one and now I finally don't have to listen to Pebblewing's lessons anymore," she sighed.

"I think he's taught you many things. When you get older, you'll see that all of them were actually helpful. I learned a lot of things from Heatherstar when I was an apprentice."

"You were the apprentice to the leader!"

"She was the deputy at that time. Curlstar was the leader," Dustywing butted in. "She was still lucky though. It is why they have a close bond now."

"Yes, and all those lessons I learned from her I passed them down onto my apprentice, Leopardpelt," Honeysong said.

"Are we done chatting now?" Featherflower asked. "I'm ready to get some freshkill in my paws."

"Alright, we'll hunt around here. Break up and see what prey you can find."

They all went their separate directions and Honeysong stuck together with Dustywing. These two normally would hunt together and they really would do well. There wouldn't be a piece of prey that they would miss.

They soon found a squirrel and they worked together so that Dustywing would lead the prey right into her paws. They easily killed the freshkill and dug a hole to bury it, hiding its scent.

The hunt didn't last too long since they found many freshkill to bring back to camp. The freshkill pile looked as full as ever.

The pair cuddled in their normal spot, but Eagleflight, Junipercloud, and Swiftfoot all joined them with sharing tongues. They talked about their day or anything else that happened.

"I had almost gotten a sparrow yesterday, but right as I was getting ready to pounce, Nightpaw was nearby with her mentor and stepped on a twig. The sparrow got scared and flew away," Eagleflight told them.

"Did you end up catching it?" Swiftfoot asked.

"Sadly no, but I did find a mouse a bit later and I quickly took it down without an apprentice being nearby."

Not too long after, Sandpaw and Nightpaw came over to join them. They had a big squirrel in their jaws for them to share.

"I can't wait to be a warrior," Nightpaw complained. "You get to do whatever you want."

"Frostcloud got mad at me for trying to hunt a rabbit near Meadowclan border. I was just trying to learn so I could come back and show my first catch to everyone," Sandpaw whined.

"You must listen to your mentors. They teach you everything that you need to know. Trust me, I was like you too," Junipercloud told them.

Honeysong smiled to herself. They had always valued kin and would always tried to share with one another everyday. She was glad that all her kits were doing fine and worked with one another. It is what she valued the most was her family.

~~~~~~~

Ryefeather finished up sorting through the herbs from what he and his new apprentice collected. A few sunrises ago Hazelflower and Wildfoot's kits were made into apprentices. Ryefeather was happy seeing that one of them, Cloudpaw, really wanted to become
~~~~~~~

a medicine cat. His littermates, Wrenpaw, Treepaw, and Mousepaw, all made fun of him for the path he decided.

"It is alright. Soon they'll be coming to you needing their wounds treated. You can make them apologize before you start treating them," he had told the silver tabby tom.

He sniffed through the piles of herbs until he found his borage leaves. He took a few and made his way over to the nursery. He smiled seeing the little kits suckling against their mother.

"How are they?" he asked.

"They're growing everyday. Soon they'll want to go play outside the den," Dovefrost smiled.

Ryefeather felt happy for his daughter. Once the four of them reached a certain age, Wolfshine and Ryefeather decided to tell them the truth. Dovefrost, Cricketfall, and Tumblespring were very accepting of them, but Quailslash was a little more hesitant.

The silver time was now accepting over their decision and now had a mate of his own. Morningbreeze was also in the nursery expecting her own kits.

Ryefeather went over and looked down at the three kits. Shadekit and Silverkit had looked like their mother while Birdkit looked like her father, Mossyleaf. He licked the tops of their heads and gave the borage leaves to Dovefrost.

"Call me if anything changes," he told the two she-cats as he left the den.

While coming out, he almost ran into Ravensky and his apprentice Wrenpaw.

"Sorry, Ryefeather. We didn't see you there," the tom meowed. He dipped his head as the two of them continued on their way.

Ryefeather walked through the clan of cats, making his way over to a certain she-cat. Wolfshine was talking to one of her sisters, Iceleap. It wasn't too long ago when the leader, Cheetahstar, passed

away. Plumstar earned her nine lives and made Iceleap as her deputy.

"How's everything in the clan?" he asked once he'd made his way over there.

"Going alright. Some of the warriors are sneaking around camp recently. Plumstar caught Badgerclaw and Pebblefur crossing the borders to the twolegplace yesterday. Earlier today, I found Shineflower almost doing the same. She looked like she was questioning herself before doing it though."

"I could talk to Brightflower about Pebblefur. At least Sunspots doesn't follow his brother," he told the deputy. "I'm sure her and Moorpatch will give a stern talking to him."

"Thank you," Iceleap mumbled.

"How is Morningbreeze?" Wolfshine asked him.

"The kits are getting bigger inside of her. It won't be too long before she is ready to start kitting."

"I'm sure Quailslash is ready. Sometimes I wonder if he is ready to be a father."

"He will be amazing once they're born."

"I hope so."

They stayed and talked for a little longer before Cricketfall and Tumblespring came over to them.

"How are you doing?" Cricketfall smiled at them. "Tumblespring and I caught a rabbit and we wanted to give it to you."

These two really have a close bond. Tumblespring wasn't much of a talker, but Cricketfall knows exactly what she is going to say. It was probably the reason why they haven't found mates yet.

"Thank you," Wolfshine told them. She went over and licked their ears in response. "I'll happily enjoy this."

Quailslash was a little different to his littermates. The tom kept to himself a lot and focused on growing himself in strength. Whitefire was a big part in that when he was his mentor. The white tom always encouraged him to improve on his battle moves and his goal was to be able to take him down.

Dovefrost was a little sassy and flirty she-cat. She bossed her littermates around. Her and Quailslash normally got into fights when they were younger. Once she became a warrior, it wasn't long before she went around trying to find a mate. She settled down with Mossyleaf in the end and Ryefeather was glad that she found a good tom.

Ryefeather and Wolfshine huddled up in the medicine cat's den. Cloudpaw was off with his littermates. They shared the squirrel that was brought to them by Cricketfall and Tumblespring.

"I love you, Wolfshine," he says. He licked the side of her face.

"Me too, Ryefeather," she replied, nuzzling her head into his neck fluff.

This is the end of the book. I loved writing it and coming up with the concept. I loved all of the characters and felt better giving them all a happy ending. Thanks for reading. Have a nice day.